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Anarchist social science : its origins and development.

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ANARCHIST SOCIAL SCIENCE: ITS ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

A Thesis Presented

By

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Affectionately dedicated to my friends

Men have sought for ages to discover the science of government; and lo! here it is, that men cease totally to attempt to govern each other at all! that they learn to know the consequences of their own acts, and that they arrange their relations with each other upon such a basis of science that the disagreeable consequences shall be assumed by the agent himself.

Stephen Pearl Andrews

PREFACE

The primary purpose of this thesis is to examine anarchist thought from a new perspective. Anarchism and anarchist thought are often portrayed in scholarly works as moral protest against the modern trends of centralized production, social injustice resulting from the abuses of economic and state power, and bureaucratization. This view of anarchism is a simplistic one that could be challenged as one-dimensional, but it is not my major concern to do so. Rather, I intend to go beyond this by looking at anarchism as a developing social scientific paradigm that can be considered as "hard" an area of social theory and critique as any other.

When I began to research this paper, I was apprehensive that there might be a lack of material concerning anarchist social science, for I knew of no book or article written specifically on this subject. Today, however, only one year later, I confess to being humbled by my subject; rather than having to "stretch" my topic, I have been forced to omit a huge amount of pertinent material. This paper, therefore, is far more limited in its scope than I had originally planned it to be. In the first place, it examines the work of only a relative few anarchist theorists, albeit the most widely

known ones. Furthermore, it is almost exclusively concerned with communitarian anarchism, which is certainly not the only form of anarchist and libertarian socialist thought. Finally, a combination of language barriers and the unavailability of some important European sources has placed certain limits upon my research. Chapter IV, which deals with contemporary anarchist social science, is especially reflective of this; the discussion is entirely in terms of contemporary Anglo-American anarchism.

Moreover, it must be kept in mind that whatever is stated in this work about areas of social thought which are non-anarchist must be limited or even implied, for they are peripheral to the scope of my subject. This paper represents only one perspective upon one aspect of a highly complex subject. A critique covering anarchist, liberal, Marxist, and conservative social sciences must be left undone for now. Such an attempt to inter-relate so many facets of the "social science" dilemma would be an undertaking of monumental proportions.

I am indebted to my family and all of my friends for their unflagging toleration, understanding and encouragement in the past year. However, I'd like to thank Alex Shishin in particular for his stimulating comments and for many lively hours of discussion relating

to this paper. Special thanks, too, to Murray Bookchin for helping me define this topic, and to Sam and Esther Dolgoff for opening their personal library to me, thereby giving me access to several rare books and pamphlets. My greatest debt is to Will Petry, whose assistance and support at every stage of my research and writing has been more valuable than I could ever say.

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C H A P T E R I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE IN RELATION TO NINETEENTH CENTURY ANARCHISM

The Development of Social Science as a Radical Critique of Pre-Nineteenth Century Methods of Studying Society

The development of anarchist social science is a fairly recent phenomenon, but its roots can be traced beyond the existence of a distinctly self-aware anarchist movement beginning in the nineteenth century. Because its history is so closely related to that of early social science, this chapter will begin with a brief discussion of the rise of sociology and political economy before we proceed to examine the early theories of communitarian anarchism.

The actual origins of social science--that is, the method developed for use in the natural sciences applied to the study of individual life and society--are tied to the scientific "revolution" directly set in motion largely by Sir Isaac Newton, Nicolaus Copernicus, and Galileo Galilei. However, it was Thomas Hobbes who effectively developed a scientific consciousness that embodied the mode of inquiry and explanation used in the natural sciences in a social theory. Hobbes, in the midst of the English Revolutionary period, attempted to

use Newton's laws of colliding matter and gravitational restraint to create a theory of social order and law with an explicitly mechanistic Newtonian flavor. He transposed Newton's thought into a social context, with human and social movement conceived of as a result of reaction. Pleasure and pain became physical functions, while humans were held to be subject to the laws of inertia--i.e., people and societies were seen by Hobbes as objects either animate or at rest that remained in motion or at rest if external forces remained constant. However, it must be remembered that Hobbes' break from a religious way of knowing was not a total one, for he seems to have been influenced as much by the traditional Augustinian view of a divinely ordered worldly existence as by Newton's universal laws of matter.[1]

Later, in English and French Enlightenment thought and in the American Revolution, emphasis began to be placed upon knowing the world in terms of a rationally determined and mechanistic law of motion. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for example, looked for the origin of government

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[1]See especially Part III, "Of a Christian Commonwealth" and Part IV, "Of the Kingdom of Darknesse" of Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (London: Pelican Books, 1972).

and property in his First and Second Discourses not by looking to the Bible, but rather in using what he felt was reason, for he was greatly influenced by the scientific spirit of the age. Enlightenment thought considered ideas to be reflected in the natural laws of the universe; a scientific construction of matter and reason was consulted for explanations in both the physical and social realms. Typical examples of this attitude may be found in the works of writers in the genre of Thomas Jefferson, Joseph Priestley, Benjamin Rush, and Thomas Paine.

The scientific mode of thought and scientific rationalism were at first considered by Enlightenment thinkers to be better conceptual frameworks than any previous ones for studying individual, social, and political realities. Eventually, the scientific outlook became the only valid perspective for most. It is impossible to pinpoint any one definite date, person, or idea as the genesis of the scientific mythos as the foundation of modern Western knowing and doing. The scientific consciousness had been slowly developing in Western thought during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and finally came forth in the Enlightenment in such a way as to replace gradually the earlier religious rules of natural order--that is, mystical modes of knowing what is real and of living in the material world.

A new way of knowing social reality has to be coupled with a doing process if it is to have any validity for social life. As has already been stated, the rise of scientific social consciousness was tied to the development of the natural sciences. The impact of the latter upon both the educated strata and the masses was tremendous. The increasing capabilities of science to create new and visible "miracles," technological innovations, and rational explanations debunked many traditional and mystical conceptions of the world. The revolutionary upheavals of the same era--from the peasant wars of the Reformation to the French Revolution--seem to have been the starting impulse for the doing belief in the social realm that made social science possible. Admittedly, this sketch may be seen as all too brief, but then, it is primarily the purpose here to stress general trends rather than to delve into the complexities and details of European history.

The French Revolution, which is often seen as the crucial point in the development of social science, may be better understood as an outstanding point in a developing process reaching back into earlier Western history. Furthermore, not only was the French Revolution the culmination of a process creating social scientific consciousness, but it also served as the impulse that gave rise to the development of most of the modern

political and social movements and theories of our own era. One lesson that the French Revolution demonstrated to the more aware segments of the population was that the social world was not only comprehensible, in a manner similar to that employed in the study of the world of matter, but that it was also changeable in scientific fashion. Social change would be effected methodically in the sense that human reason could consciously create a new social order.

With the French Revolution, the order of the Old Regime, based upon superstition and mysticism, was discredited so that it no longer represented the epitome of wisdom and morality. In its place, new social conventions arose that were scientifically oriented, eventually displacing most of the religious rules of natural order. According to the belief of at least the articulate elements, the truth of scientific reason, after the temporary "reign of terror," would bring about a "reign of virtue," for with reason humans would not only be able to know the real but could also make the possible a social reality. Order, no longer the realm of the divine, was transformed into the realm of reason by means of humanly-implemented social and political structures. Thus, the French Revolution overturned not only the Old Regime, but also the <u>thought</u> of the Old Regime, making a place for the new way of thinking and

making possible a new "reasoned" life-style for everyone.

Early social scientific thinking is developed in the works of Henri de Saint-Simon, Auguste Comte, and many others. Therefore, let us turn briefly to some of the basic assumptions of these early nineteenth century social theorists.

The early social scientists saw the social world as both understandable and alterable according to their own scientifically conceived plans of natural order. Archtypical was Saint-Simon, who could be considered the founder of both socialism and social science. He felt that the Western world was in a state of disruption and disharmony because society's economic base was still ensnared in feudal and mystical thought and customs. In his view, the political reforms of the French Revolution were only feeble steps in the right direction in the process of rationalizing the economic order of existence. The scientific plan of social life, for Saint-Simon, was to be instituted by the bankers, industrialists, and scientists, who would join forces in order to rationally re-order society from a managerial position. Once this was accomplished, everyone would benefit from the rule of enlightened judgment. The old form of human administration, politics, was an irrational and inconsistent phenomenon that had to be replaced by a system of scientific management that would control all

aspects of the economy for the benefit of all.

Auguste Comte, who was a disciple of Saint-Simon's for a time but who later broke with him, decided that he, Comte, was the person who could undertake the task of synthesizing the sciences and philosophy in order to create a new schema which would embrace all scientific thought, both natural and social. He viewed his plan, which he called positivism, as the key to a new age.

> Positivism consists essentially of a Philosophy and a Polity. These can never be dissevered, the former being the basis, and the latter the end of one comprehensive system, in which our intellectual faculties and our social sympathies are brought into close correlation with each other. For in the first place, the science of Society, besides being more important than any other, supplies the only logical and scientific link by which all our varied observations of phenomena can be brought into one consistent whole. Of this science it is even more true than any of the preceding sciences, that its real character cannot be understood without explaining its exact relation in all general features with the art corresponding to it. Now here we find a coincidence which is assuredly not fortuitious. At the very time when the theory of society is being laid down, an immense sphere is opened for the application of that theory; the direction, namely, of the social regeneration of Western Europe.[2]

When this "science of Society" became an important concern for a growing minority of intellectuals and for a limited number among the masses, as it did during the third decade of the century, the problem arose as to how "the application of that theory" to society--or to the

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[2]Auguste Comte, A General View of Positivism, trans. by J.H. Bridges (New York: Robert Speller and Sons, 1957), pp. 1-2.

"Polity," in Comte's own words--would be accomplished. Comte, whose conceptions of human community were rooted in the conservative medievalist thought of Louis G. A. de Bonald and Joseph de Maistre,[3] envisioned Positivism as the functional replacement of the medieval Church during and after society's transition from its "metaphysical" to its "scientific" stage. A new priestly-scientific elite would arise which would guide humanity in the tenets of the "Religion of Humanity"--the dogma of science--which in turn would radically reshape life according to society's natural law. His system was basically a reformulation of the Old Regime's ideals in scientific terms. Thus, Comte has the dubious distinction of being the first modern scientific reactionary, but it is the method rather than the content of the Science of Man that is the concern here.

Although today it is often regarded as quixotic, messianic and even quite nonsensical (criticisms which are not entirely unjustified), the thought of Comte, Saint-Simon, and other of the post-Enlightenment philosophers, especially Charles Fourier, presaged the coming of the Age of Science and its tremendous influence upon social life and thought. As one modern writer has analyzed Fourier, elegance, pleasure, and comfort were

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[3]Lewis A. Coser, Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1971), p. 21. Also see Leon Bramson, The Political Context of Sociology (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970), Chapter I.

cornerstones of his thought.

> Every detail of life is clearly specified: the number of inhabitants in each Phalanx (1,620), based on Fourier's notion of a 'complete scale of characters'; the ratio of sexes; the division of profits; the layout of rooms, dining-halls, libraries, workshops, etc. Fourier, as a child of the Enlightenment, was in his own way a meticulous scientist, a veritable social Newton, who formulated a complete cosmology to replace the order of his era.[4]

One of the most important effects of these thinkers' work and of the French Revolution, which had motivated them and which continued to have a great impact upon European life for decades after it had occurred, was the scientific consciousness which developed and expanded so that it became the sturdy "trunk" from which socialism and social science diverged throughout the early and mid-nineteenth century. As Peter Kropotkin stated in his study of the French Revolution, "What we learn to-day from the study of the Great Revolution is that it was the source and origin of all the present communist, anarchist, and socialist conceptions."[5]

The Development of Socialism as an Integral Part of the Rise of Social Science

Thus far, the text may seem only remotely connected, if at all, to the question of anarchist social science. It

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[4]Murray Bookchin, The Limits of the City (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 113.

[5]Peter Kropotkin, The Great French Revolution, trans. by N. F. Dryhurst (London and New York: William Heinemann and G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909; reprint ed., New York: Schocken Books, 1971), p. 581.

must be remembered, however, that anarchism did not nor could it have arisen from a social and conceptual vacuum; its development was within the context of advances in the natural sciences and of the revolutionary conditions and changes that characterized the years around the turn of the nineteenth century in Europe and in the United States. Two major factors leading to its conception have thus far been briefly discussed: first, the development of the natural sciences, both physical and biological, and their impact upon religious realities and thought patterns; and second, the English, American, and French Revolutions and the tradition of the Enlightenment, all of which demonstrated that society was humanly ordered and was therefore changeable. To this list must be added a third element, which can be deduced from the preceding two--that is, the rise of modern industrialism (technology) and its impact and potential impact upon human life, both individual and social. The influence of these three elements can be identified in the works of Saint-Simon, Comte, and Fourier, as well as in the professed principles of the rudimentary socialist movement which sprang "from the head" of the French Revolution. The "common denominator" these factors produced was the assumption that society was not only within the grasp of human reason, but that it was also malleable and could be made very different in essence from what it was if certain

scientific prescripts were correctly applied to social problems.

With the rise of acceptable scientific interpretations of social life, there also began the growth of the modern socialist tradition, with Saint-Simon, Fourier, Robert Owen, Louis Blanc, Etienne Cabet, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Karl Marx, et. al. providing the theoretical inspiration for the popular movement. However, politically speaking, socialism was visible in nascent form in the French Revolution in the activities of "Enragés" like Jacques Roux and Jean Varlet and in Gracchus Babeuf's "Conspiracy of Equals." Later, Kropotkin, in The Great French Revolution, and Marx and Friedrich Engels (as well as many others) traced the roots of socialism to the French Revolution in the left insurgent trends which were arrested by the development of bourgeois capitalism and the Thermodorian and Napoleonic reaction following the Revolution. Socialism, both libertarian and authoritarian,[6]

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[6]"Most of these terms have a major disadvantage: they fail to express the basic characteristics of the doctrine they are supposed to describe. Anarchism is really a synonym for socialism. The anarchist is primarily a socialist whose aim is to abolish the exploitation of man by man. Anarchism is only one of the streams of socialist thought, that stream whose main components are concern for liberty and haste to abolish the State. Adolph Fischer, one of the Chicago martyrs, claimed that 'every anarchist is a socialist, but every socialist is not necessarily an anarchist.'" Daniel Guérin, Anarchism, trans. Mary Klopper, with Introduction by Noam Chomsky (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 12.

as an outgrowth of social science, can be seen as a result of the shortcomings of the French Revolution and the general failure of the Enlightenment to translate itself into practice. For this reason, it is like one of its ancestors, Comte's positivism, a modernized conservative hybrid born of the same revolutionary disappointment.

Because socialism, and thus anarchism, arose out of the hopes raised by the French Revolution, it was heir to the ideals--"Liberty, Equality and Fraternity"--of the unfinished revolution[7] whose meaning, derived from the core ethics of the Enlightenment, was distorted with the rise of industrial capitalism and of reactionary politics.[8] Yet the growth of industrialism inspired a dream which some felt could free humanity from its earthly history and seeming destiny of drudgery under exploitative tyrannies. Murray Bookchin points out that those hoping

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[7]See Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century, trans. John B. Robinson (London: Freedom Press, 1923; reprint ed., New York: Gordon Press, 1972), especially Chapter 1, for a discussion of the idea that the unfulfilled ideals of the French Revolution would bring about further revolutions to fulfill them.

[8]Guérin feels that anarchism is the heir of the Enlightenment tradition: see his Anarchism. For further discussion of this, see Rudolf Rocker, "Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism" (London: Freedom Press, 1973) and Noam Chomsky, "Notes on Anarchism," in For Reasons of State (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).

to change society viewed the new technologies of industrialism--the fruits of science--as the potential liberators of humanity, for those innovations,

> both in their promise and their limitations exercised a profound influence on nineteenth century revolutionary thought. The innovations in textile and iron-making technology provided a new sense of promise, indeed a new stimulus, to socialist and utopian thought. It seemed to the revolutionary theorist that for the first time in history he could anchor his dreams of a liberatory society in the visible prospect of material abundance and increased leisure for the mass of humanity. Socialism, the theorist argued, could be based on self-interest rather than on man's dubious nobility of mind and spirit. Technological innovation had transmitted the socialist ideal from a vague humanitarian hope into a practical program.[9]

Socialism, as it developed, began to shed the ascetic ethic characteristic of its earliest days, when it had been comparable to early Christianity in its idealistic and self-abnegating brotherhoods. For socialists witnessing the advances in technology, communality and community suddenly became possible in the context of material life, for the comprehensibility and changeability of societal life and function took on a dramatic new meaning. Socialist consciousness raised a hope for a new world order and spawned various schools and ideals of socialism, all of which hoped to give concrete form to the ideals of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity." It was generally believed within the socialist tradition

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[9]Murray Bookchin, Post-Scarcity Anarchism (Berkeley: Ramparts Press, 1971), pp. 88-89.

that once the true basis of life was comprehended accurately, a new and better society built upon scientific principles could be founded. Instead of humanity being acted upon blindly by nature or its being exploited by a small minority, the new sciences and their technology would make socialism a practical proposal and its social science understandable to all; industrialism's potential meant that people would not have to wait for the churches' absolution from the curse of Adam, nor would they have to toil endlessly until the liberation from material life, death. To the early socialists, it was their social science that provided the glimpse of an alternative to the bourgeois organization of society. For them, socialism and social science became almost synonymous, for knowing how society functioned seemed to entail a demand for reform in accordance with the "rules of natural order" that scientific study discovered. Socialism viewed itself as social science carried to its logical conclusion--that economic and social reorganization be carried out and this in a rational manner with a commitment to the institution of a classless social structure which would use technology by or for all.[10]

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[10]"By or for all" depended upon what kind of socialism was in question. "For all" applied largely to authoritarian socialism and "by all" to libertarian socialism, but then, there were varying degrees in between these concepts which resulted in the advocacy of mixed forms of control over technology and people within the socialist movement.

Here we must turn to the work of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the first conscious anarchist, who formulated anarchism--libertarian socialism--as a new type of societal organization arising directly as a result of the application of the principles of the socialist social science of his day.

The Emergence of Anarchism as an Outgrowth of Socialism and of Social Science Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

It is in the work of "the father of us all," as Michael Bakunin called Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, in which can be seen the development of an actualized self-conscious anarchism within socialism. Although anarchist ideas predate Proudhon (and have had great impact, both direct and indirect, upon the development of anarchism; especially important has been the work of William Godwin), it was he who first used the term "anarchist" in its present sense, and it is because of his work that the anarchist movement became conscious of itself and deliberately began to help shape its own history in order to construct anarchism as a positive reality for some persons, if not as an actuality for many at this time.[11]

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[11]New modes of social thought are often considered extremely "utopian," far from concrete reality. However, this is an inaccurate generalization, as ideas usually do not arise in a vacuum. The so-called "utopias," if one examines them critically, as did Marie-Louise Berneri in Journey Through Utopia (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul,

To start to study Proudhon's thought in relation to the socialist notion of science as a socially beneficial process is to begin to see the motivating force for anarchist social science--i.e., the impulse to design a social community.

Proudhon's philosophy is a difficult topic to breach. Admittedly, it is nearly impossible to do justice to such a copious body of thought, even when dealing with just one limited aspect of his thought--in this case, his influence upon the definition of anarchism as a distinct school of socialist thought and his reinterpretation of and selective integration from the social sciences of his era to serve as the basis of an anarchist social science.[12]

1950; reprint ed., New York: Schocken Books, 1971), look strangely similar to their times and are in fact anchored firmly in the social milieus of their creators.

[12]It must be remembered that this discussion is highly selective and in no way gives the full flavor or meaning of the multi-faceted thought of Proudhon, who was most concerned with justice, morality, and labor. For one of the better discussions of Proudhon, see Guérin's Anarchism.

Another difficulty in the study of Proudhon is that his work is almost inaccessible on this side of the Atlantic and little of it is in English. Those books that are in English are mostly his early works. What Is Property? (1840) and The System of Economic Contradictions (1846) were translated and published by Benjamin Tucker, the individualist anarchist, in the 1880's. The General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century (1851) was translated by John Beverley Robinson and published in 1923 by Freedom Press. War and Peace was translated by Bartholomeo Vanzetti while he was in Dedham Prison but

Proudhon drew heavily from the socialist tradition and movement and from the social sciences of his time, both of which were becoming more acceptable (if not primary) ways of explaining the social world. He attempted to actualize what he felt was a "true" social science, using the existing sources in political economy to explain how the industrial-market system functioned and drawing upon certain stated socialist ideals to create a vision of a society based upon a rational and social use of technology for the use and benefit of all. Although Proudhon, introduced to socialism by Moses Hess (the noted German radical of the previous generation who also "converted" Engels), drew quite heavily from Comte and his Positive science of reality and Saint-Simon's and Fourier's socialist conceptions of an ideal rational material society, he himself admitted only three definite influences on his thought: Adam Smith, Georg Friedrich Hegel, and the Bible. Nevertheless, the impression made by others, especially by the previous generation of

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seems never to have been published. There are two books of selections from Proudhon in English: Proudhon's Solution to the Social Problem, compiled in 1927 by Henry Cohen, containing selections on mutual banking and published by Vanguard Press; and the more recent (1969) anthology, The Selected Writings of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, compiled by Stewart Edwards and published by Doubleday. As welcome as they are, these works nevertheless overemphasize Proudhon's economic works and underrepresent his overtly political writing, especially from Justice (1858) and The Political Capacity of the Working Class (1865).

"utopian socialists" and political economists, is apparent. Drawing from Smith and the other political economists and from Saint-Simon's industrial-managerial socialism and Fourier's phalanstry social life (which pictured whole individuals engaged in agriculture and manual labor in stark contrast to the prevailing system of alienating labor that served only to enrich the capitalist and the state at the expense of community and individuals' physical and psychic well-being), he concluded that the economic structures were the base of human society and therefore that the understanding of these structures was a most critical intellectual endeavor. Such knowledge could be gained in the study of political economy. He wrote,

> Political economy is, therefore, the natural history of the most apparent and most universally accredited customs, traditions, practices and methods of humanity in all that concerns itself in fact and in right: in fact, because the phenomena which it studies are constant, spontaneous, and universal; in right because these phenomena rest on the authority of the human race, the strongest authority possible. Consequently, political economy called itself a science; that is a rational and systematic knowledge of regular and necessary facts.[13]

Because the subject of political economy dealt indirectly with basic human needs--food, clothing, and

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[13]Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, The System of Economic Contradictions, trans. Benjamin R. Tucker, The Evolution of Capitalism Series (Boston: Benjamin R. Tucker, 1888; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1972), pp. 45-46.

shelter--in relation to the market-system, for Proudhon, as for Marx and Engels and other early socialists, the political economists Smith, J.B. Say and David Ricardo were precursors of true economic social science; ironically, then, the latter writers were indirectly founders of socialism. In contrast to Comte's Positivist "Religion of Humanity," political economy was more comprehensible. It was more suited to detailed explanation of the operations of bourgeois economy. Furthermore, it could be modified for use as a critique of bourgeois society and as a conceptual tool for the theoretical construction of a socialist alternative, despite the bourgeois sympathies and biases of its founders, theorists and most adherents.

Unlike Smith, Say, and the other bourgeois political economists, Proudhon saw nothing scientific--"rational and systematic"--about the way in which the capitalist economy functioned in his time, viewing the idea that it was scientific as based upon an acute fallacy. He criticized Say specifically and bourgeois political economy in general.

> . . . Say says, and repeats, that value being based on utility, and utility depending entirely on our needs, whims, customs, etc., value is as variable as opinion. Now political economy being the science of values, of their production, distribution, exchange, and consumption,--if exchangeable value cannot be absolutely determined, how is political economy possible? How can it be a science? How can two economists look each other in the face without

> laughing? How dare they insult metaphysicians and psychologists? . . . And the Hermes of economy, Trismegistus Say, devoting half a volume to the amplification of the solemn text, political economy is a science, has the courage to affirm immediately afterwards that this science cannot determine its object, --which is equivalent to saying that it is without a principle or foundation! He does not know, then, . . . the nature of a science; or rather, he knows nothing of the subject which he discusses.
>
> Say's example has borne its fruits. Political economy, as it exists at present, resembles ontology: discussing effects and causes, it knows nothing, decides nothing. The ideas honored with the name of economic laws are nothing more than a few trifling generalities, to which the economists thought to give an appearance of depth by clothing them in high sounding words. As for the attempts that have been made by the economists to solve social problems, all that can be said of them is that if a glimmer of sense occasionally appears in their lubrications, they immediately fall back into absurdity.[14]

Yet these forerunners of socialism in political economy had actually begun the process of abstraction and theory construction which made the economic functions of society intelligible, making possible the socialist reformulation of economic thought so as to be congruent with the ideals of science and of new conceptions of social justice. Political economy explained bourgeois society in terms of economic realities of the market--e.g., supply and demand--and of individual economic interests. It was left to socialist social science to explicate the human realities of the market system and to find ways to actualize the

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[14]Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, What Is Property? (n.p.: Humboldt Publishing Co., ca. 1890; reprint ed., New York: Dover Books, 1970), pp. 136-137.

potential for freedom within society by reconstructing society around the economic interests of all. Since all humanity faced the same economic needs--"the laws of necessity itself"[15]--the economic base of society was a basic fact of the structure of all human societies and was the unifying principle of life. "Necessity," said Proudhon,

> . . . is inevitably the same throughout the world [and] does not depend upon the fancies of men or nations: it yields to the caprice of none. There is not a Russian, English, Austrian, Tartar, or Hindoo political economy, anymore than there is a Hungarian, German or American physics or geometry. Truth alone is equal everywhere: science is the unity of mankind.[16]

It was exactly here, in the universality of necessity--the basic physical requirements of life--that Proudhon saw his socialist critique of political economy becoming scientific. That is, the "unity" of humankind in necessity demanded a new form of social life which the bourgeois society and its political economy denied, grounded as they were in competition and the advancement of existing structures. Bourgeois political economy, for Proudhon, denied the basic reality of social life in its paradigmatic inability to accept the laws of necessity as the determinants of labor and value.

To eliminate the dilemma of value and labor in

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[15]Proudhon, The General Idea of the Revolution, p. 294.

[16]Ibid., p. 283.

political economy, which, as a socialist he considered its most severe error, Proudhon stressed need as the central concern and criterion of value rather than artificial market standards.

> Has every creation of industry a venal, absolute, unchangeable, and consequently legitimate and true value? --Yes.
>
> Can every product of man be exchanged for some other product of man? --Yes again.
>
> How many nails is a pair of shoes worth?
>
> If we can solve this appalling problem, we shall have the key of the social system for which humanity has been searching for six thousand years. In the presence of this problem the economist recoils confused; the peasant who can neither read nor write replies without hesitation: 'As many as can be made in the same time, and with the same expense.'[17]

For Proudhon, then, the solution of the social problem was in allowing the universal laws of necessity to reconstruct the economy so that a unity of humanity in a new social life (not that unlike Comte's "Religion of Humanity") would be made possible by a new social order based upon the exchange of need. This solution, as an offensive position, necessarily generated political activism (as did all of the socialist sects) in contrast to bourgeois political economy, which as an integral part of the capitalist establishment, had the more passive role of reinforcing the status quo. It is interesting to note in passing that although the characters and particulars of the situation have changed, its structure remains

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[17]Proudhon, What Is Property?, p. 137.

basically unchanged to this day.

Since only work (labor) could fulfill human needs equitably, the world of work had to be constructed. Under Proudhon's new order, force, necessary to hold together a society based upon the maintenance of private property--"theft"--and remnants of feudal privilege would no longer be necessary for cohesiveness; indeed, physical coercion would be antithetical to the promotion of true unity. Instead, if labor was evenly exchanged, harmony would be achieved spontaneously. Although the process of economic reconstruction in Proudhon's system was modeled after the scheme of the philosopher Fourier, in the hands of Proudhon, a puritanical moralist, Fourier's social program, which the latter posited as a necessary adjunct of his economic plan, was transformed from a conception of community based on harmony of the (passionate) senses into a community in which harmony would arise only from the "sensual" gratification of hard work and moral prudence. Regarding harmony, Proudhon wrote:

> It is an inward pleasure, to be found as much in solitary meditative reflection as in the bustle of the workshop. It results from the worker's sense that he is making full use of his faculties--the strength of his body, the skill of his hands and the agility of his mind; it comes from his sense of pride at overcoming difficulties, at taming nature, at acquiring knowledge and at guaranteeing his independence. It is a sense of communion with the rest of the human race through the memory of past

> struggles, through identity of purpose and the equal sharing of well-being.[18]

The unity of life and reason--the comprehensibility and order of utility and function demanded by economic necessity--would be attained spontaneously once society was unburdened of the crass monopolies and superstitions of privilege which deny the true value of each person's labor and the value of collective labor[19] and which prohibit the operation of society according to the laws of necessity.

Proudhon summed up his economic theory thus:

> Utility equals utility.
> Function equals function.
> Service pays for service.
> One day's work equals another day's work.
> All products will be paid for by the products that have cost the same in effort and expense.[20]

The new order would be a world of justice and rational

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[18]Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Selected Writings of P.J. Proudhon, edited by Stewart Edwards, trans. Elizabeth Fraser (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1969), pp. 81-82.

[19]The concept of collective labor, or "collective force" as Proudhon called it, was an original concept of his meaning basically that cumulative action is worth more in terms of productivity than the labor of separate individuals. Thus the achievement of ten workers doing one task for one hour is greater than that of one worker doing that task for ten hours. The concept is closely tied to the idea of the division of labor, which Proudhon regarded as a "correlative facet of the same law" --the division of labor becomes a collective force. See Proudhon, Selected Writings, p. 45.

[20]Ibid., p. 64.

equity in all things--mutualism--and of the rational realm of science in which the exchange of necessity for kind would be actualized for all people by the natural social process.

> In order to put things right the proletariat is called upon to provide a pattern for order, that is to say to create the very science of Economics.[21]

This "pattern for order," shaped by the needs of the existing society's productive segments ("proletariat" had a wider meaning for Proudhon than it did for Marx), would materialize as societies of mutual work with a people's mutual bank as a "broker" for these groups exchange labor and value on a scientifically determined basis of equity.

According to Proudhon, when society becomes aware that universal labor is the functional basis of life, the society of true scientific socialism will begin to come into being. The process will commence whereby the functional and pragmatic working class will replace the medieval and industrial lords of the irrational past as the determining influence upon economic, social and political activity. Property, which Proudhon defined as theft because its basis is in privilege rather than in the recognition of labor as value, will cease to exist. Furthermore, the new economic order will spawn a new

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[21]Proudhon, Selected Writings, pp. 46-47.

moral order as the values of the working class become the basis of a new morality of labor. The working class, once aware of itself as a functional class, will become a political class. It then will redraw society according to its own values and the scientific guidelines of the new political economy, mutualism.

Strongly influenced by Hegelian thought, Proudhon looked at the history of social life as the development of a social consciousness by which humanity became aware of itself throughout successive stages of evolutionary development. He saw a dialectic of progress in society, moving from instinct unconscious of itself in the beginning toward self-aware reason at some time in future history.

> In human society instinct and reason, which are present there in parallel to each other, are both raised to their highest level. Humanity and Divinity are, in the Social Body, combined, but first of all they are antagonistic. The manifestations of instinct constitute Divine or Providential rule, while the manifestations of philosophy constitute the rule of liberty. Religions, empires, the poetry, and monuments of the past are created by social spontaneity, which reason ceaselessly revises and rejuvenates.
>
> But in society as well as in the individual, reason and reflection always triumph over instinct and spontaneity. This is the characteristic feature of our species and it accounts for the fact that we progress. It follows that Nature in us seems to retreat while Reason comes to the fore, or, in other words, God retires and Mankind advances.[22]

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[22]Proudhon, Selected Writings, pp. 242-243.

Dialectical development, then, is the process by which rationality overcomes unconscious instinct, and in so doing creates true scientific method. This, in turn, ultimately transcends and transforms all prior forms of knowing and doing. It is interesting to note that there are strong Augustinian overtones in this view of human nature as he saw it evidenced in past history.

> The closer man is to the beasts, the more deeply he is sunk into that miserable condition the philosophers of the last century termed a state of nature, the more he is forced to rely on the use of his own limbs and, as a result, the less he fulfills his potential and the less he works. Social progress is assessed in terms of the development of industry and the sophistication of tools. A man who cannot or does not know how to work with tools is an anomaly or a freak. He cannot be called a man.[23]

As for Saint-Simon, Comte, Fourier, Marx, et al., the ultimate goal of humanity was for Proudhon the progressive development of reason as the scientific basis of society. The quote below illustrates the fact that Proudhon was thinking in terms highly similar to Saint-Simon and Comte when he dealt with what he felt was the epistemology of science.

> . . . there have been three great stages in the development of human knowledge: the Religious, the Philosophic, and the Scientific. . . .
>
> By Progress I mean the mind's upward movement, through the three successive stages of Religion, Philosophy and Metaphysics, toward Science.[24]

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[23] Proudhon, Selected Writings, pp. 239-240.

[24] Ibid., p. 239.

As human reason matured in successive stages of comprehending the world, so too would the means for doing--creating a society in harmony with the laws of economic necessity. In Proudhon's work, as in the tradition of social science, society was not only knowable but actually changeable--"the science of society" and positivism were alike in this respect--and with a reasoned economic base, humanity would enter a stage of development in which a higher level of ordered life would be the result of a harmony with natural laws. It is apparent that within this conceptual framework, socialism becomes scientific only if it constitutes more than criticism.

> . . . so long as it restricts itself to criticizing existing politics and economics and puts forward its hypothesis for criticism, [socialism] is a form of protest. Insofar as it formulates practical positive ideas, it is the same as social science.[25]

Consequently, Proudhon favored a realistic and constructive type of socialism and insisted that it synthesize two vital characteristics:

> Socialism is right to protest against political economy and say that it is simply an unthinking mechanism, and political economy is right to say that socialism is merely an unrealistic utopia which cannot possibly come into being. But since each in turn is denying something, socialism humanity's past experience and political economy humanity's reason, both are inadequate statements about the truth of human life.
>
> Social science is the marriage of reason and social practices. While our former teachers had only rare glimpses of this science, it will be given to us in

> this century to contemplate it in all its splendor and sublime harmony.[26]

Thus social science and anarchism are functional equivalents in that they both can create an equitable social order which is the ultimate goal of humanity.

Proudhon posited anarchism as his equivalent of the Kantian categorical imperative for the just, happy and harmonious adoption of humans to the business of meeting necessity. The new order would find its own meaning and function in the practical and rational economy (mutualism) and its adjunctive social system (anarchism). Organized coercion, the state, incompatible with rational systems, would disappear and a new sort of "government" would take its place.

> By the word [Anarchy] I wanted to indicate the extreme limit of political progress. Anarchy is, if I may be permitted to put it this way, a form of government or constitution in which public and private consciousness, formed through the development of service and law, is alone sufficient to maintain order and guarantee all liberties.[27]

The order that would prevail is anarchy, the social order of social science and the practical and functional form of socialism.

Proudhon's contribution to later anarchist thought concerning social science and socialism must be viewed

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[26]Proudhon, Selected Writings, p. 56.

[27]Ibid., pp. 91-92.

as an immense one, even from a critical perspective. It was he who took the first step towards formulating a coherent theory of anarchism that could serve as both a critique and an ideal, although it is true that his work appeared at an opportune moment in history; in contrast to other anarchistic thinkers (especially Godwin), it was not necessary for the anarchist movement to "rediscover" Proudhon. Nevertheless, he was truly "the father of us all"; he was to be followed by a school of successors who would build upon his work, reformulate it, and in many ways change it. He was able to amalgamate elements of the socialism, political economy, and philosophy of his era--the positivism of Comte, the dialectical mode of inquiry of Hegel and Kant, the economic content of Smith et al., and even some traditional elements, as well as many of the beliefs of his predecessors and contemporaries within the socialist movement--to comprise his unique theory, which is the forerunner of modern anarchism. He should certainly be considered part of the socialist tradition (he is sometimes "read out" by socialists who are unsympathetic to anarchist thought), for like all of his contemporaries within the socialist movement(s), he viewed the comprehensibility and changeability of life due to the promises of technology as both possible and imminent. And, like his fellow socialists, he saw a

formal social science as entirely compatible with and in fact auxiliary to socialism in practice. Furthermore, that social science, if it was to apply to social reconstruction, had to be clearly defined in terms of a universally applicable social order.

> It is our first business, then, to ascertain what a science of society must be.
>
> Science in general is the logically arranged and systematic knowledge of that which is. Applying this idea to society, we will say: Social science is the logically arranged and systematic knowledge, not of that which society has been, nor of that which it will be, but of that which it is in its whole life; that is, in the sum total of its successive manifestations: for there alone can it have reason and system. Social science must include human order, not alone in such or such a period of duration, nor in a few of its elements; but in all its principles and in the totality of its existence; as if social science, spread throughout time, should find itself suddenly gathered and fixed in a picture which, exhibiting the series of the ages and the sequence of phenomena, revealed their connection and unity. Such must be the science of every living and progressive reality; such social science indisputably is.[28]

This statement might have been written by any of the socialists active during the first half of the nineteenth century.

Proudhon was not the rural idyllist he is often portrayed as by many of his critics and commentators. He should be viewed as a bona fide socialist, despite certain idealist and ruralist tendencies that were present, for he was an activist and a thinker whose

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[28]Proudhon, System of Economic Contradictions, pp. 52-53.

sympathies were with the advancement of justice in the industrial future rather than in a return to the bucolic past.

> Others draw back in alarm before the developments of economics and look back in anguish to the days when industry was simple and spinning was done in the home, to the days of the communal bakehouse. Thus they retreat into the past.[29]

Unless one desires to oversimplify Proudhon, one must ask why he wrote for the developing working class and why his following was so numerous if he was indeed an anachronistic anomaly. It is true that he did believe that agriculture was "the hub of all industry. . . "[30] but it produced the first priority of necessity, food. Also, consistent with Proudhon's socialist sympathies was "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," which he stated in similar terms at several points in his What Is Property?.[31] Thus, his "credentials" as a modern socialist are virtually incontestable.

Anarchists who followed him may not have agreed entirely with Proudhon's thought or actions, especially in regard to his low opinion of women, his racism, his puritanical morality, his glorification of hard work for

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[29]Proudhon, Selected Writings, p. 50.

[30]Ibid., p. 84.

[31]Proudhon, What Is Property?, p. 132.

its own sake, and his zealous praise of war; but then, they could not have ignored his work, for he constructed the theory of what he believed was a functional and self-actualizing creative order in which rule would be replaced by a self-regulating social process. He especially influenced Bakunin, and his quarrel with Marx helped shape the directions of modern socialism, as the following chapters will illustrate. Contemporary communitarian anarchist social science, although its vision and methodology are quite different from Proudhon's, nevertheless remains quite indebted to his contributions.

This chapter has been a brief sketch of Proudhon's legacy to anarchist social science. He had conceived and formulated a rational and systematic knowledge of what he posited to be social facts and using it, hoped to be able to demonstrate the urgency of the need to change instinctual reaction to reasoned action so that necessity could completely meet its own needs. From here, we must pass on to later anarchists' perceptions of Proudhon's anarchist social science, their use of it, the changes that they made in it, and the critique they formulated of both their various socialist "competitors" and of themselves as anarchism developed.

C H A P T E R I I

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF AN ANARCHIST PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

Chapter I covered the development of a consciousness embodying "what is, is real" and the concommitant confidence to understand and even attempt to change the material world. Now we are faced with the task of delineating the practical implications and consequences of the social scientific thought that emerged early in the nineteenth century; in light of the present predominant forms of Western social science, it is indeed ironic that little more than a century ago, the idea of a social science was strongly grounded in materialist philosophy and entwined both conceptually and as a movement of intellectuals with socialist ideals.

We have seen that socialism began its development as a conceptual polyglot within which several distinct movements and schools of thought eventually emerged. Initially there existed an apparent harmony within the socialist movement, but it was more a harmony of conceptual innocence than one of philosophical and practical purpose. The conflicts arose as personalities and thought diverged within the nascent movement, and with these conflicts came varying definitions of socialist

thought and organization. All socialist factions sought to introduce unity to a humanity divided by market relations and the division of labor and society, with the common end of meeting the material needs of all. However, a major dilemma, implicit in their basic assumptions, confronted the socialists, most of whom were strongly influenced by the scientific mythos: As there could only be one unity of humanity and as there was only one science--one law of "social gravity"--the belief arose that there had to be one social science with one true socialism as its end. This aggravated differences of opinion and brought about the fragmentation of socialism as a popular movement. Within this situation, however, some personalities and factions were more tolerant of divergences and varieties of thought than were others, for they recognized that a "perfect" social science was still undeveloped, just as a perfect society--socialism--had yet to be built. Thus, "correct" social science would arise spontaneously over time, shaped not by human argument and cerebration, but by necessity. Social science, when it emerged from material circumstances, would then provide clear and sufficient knowledge for the construction of socialist society. For these people, no single theory yet in existence could regulate every detail of living without destroying free spontaneous action, which was required to fulfill material necessity

(see Proudhon, Chapter I). Others within the socialist movement perceived their method and thought as being fully developed, and demanded adherence to their "correct" and elaborate schemes of socialism, some of which were drawn to the minutest detail, including descriptions of the clothing that would be worn in their socialist utopias.

In considering the divergences and development of socialism, one must be careful not to regard every action or thought solely in terms of conflict of personalities, neuroses, vindictiveness, and so forth. It must be emphasized that the differences among the early socialists were substantive, even if personalistic considerations were a factor. Yet the latter must not be ignored, as must not the racism, chauvinism, sexism, megalomania, etc. that existed to differing extents within the various schools and in many individuals in the socialist movement, for such elements did contribute to the shaping of each particular strain. Thus, due to contrasts in thought and temperament, distinct conceptions of socialist consciousness were formed whose development was not only a reaction to the capitalist realities, but also to those of a changing socialism as well. Early anarchist thought concerning social science, then, like anarchism in general, should not be seen only as a

response to the use (or abuse) of humans by capitalist technology and society, but it should also be viewed in terms of a development in sympathy and/or antipathy with other schools of socialism, such as Blanquism, Fourierism, Blancism, to name but a few. Marxian thought especially must be examined in this vein, for to see the development of anarchist social science in relation to socialism and social science in general, it is necessary to look at Marxian thought, which has been closely associated with anarchism for so long a time.

Proudhon's Critique of Marx and Marxism

As fascinating as it is, the relation to anarchism of Karl Marx and his followers is a topic too broad to be covered here.[1] Therefore, our discussion of Marxism will be peripheral to anarchism (for once, Marxism is anarchism's footnote). To the serious scholar of socialism, however, much of what is said about anarchism will naturally imply a great deal about Marxism. It must be admitted even by those anarchists most critical of Marx that Marx's thought was the "field of conflict" in which anarchism developed at least as much as it grew in relation to the hostile environment of bourgeois

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[1]One good treatment of this subject is Richard Adamiak's "The 'Withering Away' of the State: A Reconsideration," The Journal of Politics 32 (February 1970): 3-18.

society and bourgeois conceptions of political economy; it was from the clashes of (socialist) doctrine that took place in the mid-nineteenth century that anarchist social science emerged with a clear vision of its own nature and purpose. It was not until the 1840's that the contradictory conceptions of socialism ruptured the apparent unity of the socialist movement to split into distinctly libertarian and authoritarian state socialist strains. However, this is not to imply that the differing wings of the socialist movement were ideal types in the Weberian sense, for they were admixtures and variations of all sorts. For purposes of this discussion, "libertarian socialism" will be used to refer to the nineteenth century anarchist movement, while "state socialism" will refer to those groups who were inclined to regard the state as an instrument of post-revolutionary transformation and to advocate adherence to guidelines and programs set forth by the revolutionary "vanguards" who would run the workers' state, with the understanding that the division between the two types is somewhat arbitrary and is not categorically exclusive.

With the anarchist Proudhon, socialist thought took a qualitative leap from pre-1846 socialist conceptions of improving capitalist modes of social life and production to formally envisioning a new social order which would

bear little resemblance to the world that gave birth to it. As Martin Buber, a twentieth century thinker, would later observe,

> . . . advancing from the idea of social reconstruction to the idea of structural renewal, Proudhon took the decisive step. The 'industrial constitution' of Saint-Simon does not signify a new structure, but 'federalism' does.[2]

Proudhon's critique of the disharmony and callousness inherent in capitalism was much more than solely an attack on non-rationalized function within capitalism; in his system (unlike in Saint-Simon's, for example), a new social framework was proposed in which there would be no room for giant industry and the banker captains of capital. As Proudhon saw it, capitalism's fault was not primarily in irrational distribution and production. Rather, it was by its nature irrational, for it denied life its true quality--humanity's right to labor freely to meet necessity in its own way. The new socialist order meant an order of work, but work through which people could restore necessity to its true central function of regulating life, in place of the prevailing tyranny of privilege. All would produce, manage, and exchange their products by means of free federations of productive units. There would be no need for a managerial elite/state, as necessity under these conditions would fulfill itself (anarchy).

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[2]Martin Buber, Paths in Utopia (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. 32.

As they themselves conceded, Marx and Engels were affected by these ideas of Proudhon's. Because of Marx's feud with Proudhon, the former later denied any conceptual link with the latter, but it must be admitted that Marx and Engels owe at least as much in a positive sense to Proudhon's early anarchism as anarchism owes to them.

> In 1844 Marx and Engels (in their book The Holy Family) had found in Proudhon's book on Property a scientific advance which 'revolutionizes political economy, and makes a science of political economy possible for the first time'; they had further declared that not only did he write in the interests of the proletariat but that he was a proletarian himself and his work 'a scientific manifesto of the French proletariat' of historic significance. And as late as May 1846, in an anonymous essay, Marx had dubbed him 'a communist,' in a context, moreover, which made it obvious that Proudhon was still a representative communist in his eyes at the time, some six months before the Polemic [The Poverty of Philosophy] was written.[3]

Thus began anarchism's love-hate affair with Karl Marx, who influenced early anarchism as both a brilliant thinker and an unusually vindictive and feuding relative in the socialist "family." There was finally a bitter rupture where there had originally been an apparent harmony of interests. Following the break, Marx and Engels' enmity for Proudhon became almost unrestrained, and they renounced him as a socialist and tried to read

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[3]Buber, Paths in Utopia, p. 4.

him out of the movement.

> True in the Manifesto he had been named as an example of the 'conservative or bourgeois socialists' and in the Polemic Marx had declared that Proudhon was far inferior to the socialists, 'because he has neither the sufficient courage nor sufficient insight to raise himself, if only speculatively, above the bourgeois horizon'; and after Proudhon's death he asserted in a public obituary that even today he would have to confirm every word of this judgement, and a year later he explained in a letter that Proudhon had done 'immense harm' and, by his 'sham-criticism and sham-opposition to the Utopians' had corrupted the younger generation and the workers. But another year later, nine years before writing the anti-Dühring book, Engels states in one of the seven reviews which he published anonymously on the first volume of Marx's Capital, that Marx wanted to 'provide socialist strivings with the scientific foundation which neither Fourier nor Proudhon nor even Lassalle had been able to give.[4]

Later, Engels, in his version of socialism's history (Socialism: From Utopia to Science, part of Anti-Dühring), refused to mention Proudhon, even amongst those who were labelled "utopian socialists," well-intentioned but misguided individuals (e.g. Fourier and Saint-Simon).[5] However, this treatment of Proudhon by Engels, as well as by Marx, was quite unfair. Despite the basic conservatism of his character, Proudhon never denied that the concept of surplus value was basic to the structure of capitalism; indeed, it can be stated without reservation that he

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[4]Buber, Paths in Utopia, p. 4.

[5]A utopian socialist, for Engels, was one who would or could not quite grasp the tenets of "scientific socialism" in the Marxian sense because of the survival of the old attitudes that had been internalized in the historical condition existing immediately prior to the

helped develop the concept in his What Is Property? in 1840. He never agreed with Saint-Simon that bankers and capitalists would or could manage socialism as a rechartered megacorporation. Neither did he deny the reality of class antagonism within capitalist society, for he believed that by precluding free labor, capitalism automatically generated internal conflict. He differed with Marx and Engels as to the role, composition, and revolutionary function of the working class, but he never doubted that there was the need for a qualitative change in the modes of production. Finally, he was certainly not so naive as to think that nationalization of industry automatically entailed a new form of social life and liberated everyone to be creative producers. Nevertheless, after he and Marx parted company, Proudhon was not mentioned by the latter except as a petty-bourgeois philosopher, a class traitor and an enemy of socialism.

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development of a comprehensive reality of scientific socialism. He perceived the common denominator of utopian socialism to be the belief that socialism could be introduced by the peaceful emancipation of humanity through the reasoned action of all classes. According to Engels, the utopians' attempt to undo capitalism was inherently impossible due to the internal antagonisms capitalism generated: the reorganization of society by class struggle was the only possible solution. In brief, these thinkers glossed over the central reality of socialism, the struggle between workers and the bourgeois strata.

Admittedly, the split between Marx and Proudhon was quite a personal one, but here we must deal with it on its conceptual level: Valid scholarship demands more than a "psychologized" explanation. Much of the vituperation was a manifestation of Marx's deep concern over conflicting forms of social thought within the socialist movement. The times added significantly to the controversy since the widely held belief within the socialist ranks in the 1840's was that revolution was imminent.

There was much in common between Proudhon and Marx. Both men were writers and actors within the socialist tradition and believed that economic necessity was central to the development of a society that could tap the full creative potential of individuals. Work and technology were prominent concerns of both and they both believed that capitalism was incompatible with socialism. They agreed on the fact that workers were robbed of their surplus value and that an economic social science was possible. Yet their many common assumptions about the desirability of a scientifically rationalized society and the exploitative order that they lived under notwithstanding, they nevertheless sharply diverged over many matters. On May 17, 1846, Proudhon replied to a letter Marx had written to him regarding establishing a socialist communications network:

> . . . although my ideas on matters of organization and realization are at the moment quite settled, at least as far as principles are concerned, I believe that it is my duty, and that it is the duty of all socialists, to maintain for some time yet an attitude of criticism and doubt. In short, I profess with the public an almost total anti-dogmatism in economics.
>
> By all means let us work together to discover the laws of society, the ways in which these laws are realized and the process by which we are able to discover them. But, for God's sake, when we have demolished all a priori dogmas, do not let us think of indoctrinating the people in our turn. . . . I wholeheartedly applaud your idea of bringing all shades of opinion to light. Let us have a good and honest polemic. Let us set the world an example of wise and farsighted tolerance, but simply because we are leaders of a movement let us not instigate a new intolerance. Let us not set ourselves up as apostles of a new religion, even if it be the religion of logic or reason. Let us welcome and encourage all protests, let us get rid of all exclusiveness and all mysticism. Let us never consider any question exhausted, and when we have used our very last argument, let us begin again, if necessary, with eloquence and irony. On this condition I will join your association with pleasure, otherwise I will not.[6]

Yet the question of defining socialism and its social science was indeed exhausted between Marx and Proudhon; their conflicting conceptions ended all communication between them, and with this, closed off the chances of their respective schools working "together to discover the laws of society." Marx's dogmatic tendencies have been briefly noted; Proudhon, too, had set ideas as to the true nature of good socialist social science, and while he called for tolerance, his own ideas were

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[6]Proudhon, Selected Writings, p. 150.

nevertheless firmly established in his mind as objectively correct. In the same letter, he stated:

> I must also make some observations about the phrase in your letter 'at the time for action.' Perhaps you still hold the opinion that no reform is possible without a helping coup de main, without what used to be called a revolution but which is quite simply a jolt. I confess that most recent studies have led me to abandon this view. . . . I do not think this is what we need in order to succeed, and consequently we must not suggest revolutionary action as the means of social reform because this supposed means would simply be an appeal to force and arbitrariness. In brief, it would be a contradiction. I put the problem in this way: How can we put back into society, through some system of economics, the wealth which has been taken out of society by another system of economics? In other words, through Political Economy, we must turn the theory of Property against Property in such a way as to create what you German socialists call community and which for the moment I will only go so far as calling liberty or equality. Now I think I know the way in which this problem may be very quickly solved. Therefore, I would rather burn Property little by little than give it renewed strength by making a Saint Bartholomew's Day of property owners.[7]

Proudhon was confident that he had found the way to socialism "through some system of economics," mutualism--The Mutual Bank of (labor) Exchange and workers' associations. The function of these organizations was to be the exchange of labor for labor and value for value to meet the demands of necessity. These structures could be initiated within the capitalist system and in time, they would develop so that a new society would

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[7]Proudhon, Selected Writings, p. 151.

emerge from the new economic base.[8] Proudhon, in the above quote, answered Marx's letter by addressing himself to what he felt was a tendency of certain schools of socialism prior to the revolutions of 1848 to view the political reorganization of capitalism as a coup de main--a seizure of power. Schemes based upon this assumption, he was confident, were doomed to failure, for they would neglect to change the structure of the economic system and could succeed only in grafting a new managerial group onto the old regime, in the fashion of Saint-Simon. Furthermore, the coup de main theories ignored the organic reality of Political Economy--that is, that change cannot be forced from above--and were therefore totally impractical.

Marx answered Proudhon's letter and his book with his polemical The Poverty of Philosophy. He rejected Proudhon's vision of social science and its order, anarchy, refusing to consider it even as a socialist alternative. Even if they were able to agree on the nature of capitalism, Marx's and Proudhon's concepts of socialism negated one another so that they were conceptually deadlocked. Then, when Marx and Engels, in their 1848 Manifesto, expounded the practical tenets of their scientific socialism and their model of proletarian

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[8]This is detailed in System of Economic Contradictions, to which Proudhon alluded in the above letter to Marx.

revolution, they effectively ensured a permanent split, for Proudhon's science of society then stood in sharp contrast to their own. By positing a positive function for the state and coercive authority in the creation of socialism, Marx's and Engels' scientific socialism based itself on assumptions entirely unacceptable to the Proudhonian rules of natural order. Thus, the similarities between Marxian socialism and anarchist socialism (anarchism) after 1848 were not great enough to enable their adherents to create a common matrix of scientific aspirations, a unity of vision of an ideal social order, or even a basis for any long-range cooperation. Instead of a tolerance and a diversity, there began to develop the absoluteness of two hostile camps within socialism. The failure of the schemes of the state socialists in France of 1848 reinforced the schism. Animosity became the prevailing feeling, a result of the belief that there could be only one true solution to a given social problem.

> From February to June 1848, the attempts of the socialist Republic in France to implement the idealistic schemes of Blanc, Saint-Simon, Fourier and others had all ended as abyssmal failures. State socialism had been discredited in the eyes of both the Right and of some elements of the Left. One bourgeois writer, Reybaud, wrote in 1852: 'To speak of socialism nowadays is to deliver a funeral oration. . . . Should the human mind in its vertigo ever take it up again it will be in a different form or under the influence of other illusions.' But far more significant, Proudhon epitomized the new negative attitude of a growing segment of the Left toward 'that fictitious being, without intelligence,

> without morality, that we call the State.' Thus by 1851 the polarization of nineteenth century European radicalism was already under way.[9]

It was this situation that existed when, in the 1860's, Michael Bakunin continued the formulation of an anarchist social science by expanding and refining Proudhon's earlier critique from a uniquely anarchist perspective.

Bakunin's Critique of Socialism and Social Science

Michael Bakunin's conceptions of anarchism, socialism, and good social science synthesized elements of various schools of the socialist tradition, but he owed the most to Proudhon. He himself acknowledged Proudhon's contributions to his intellectual development in relation to the lessons he, Bakunin, had learned from Marx. The following excerpt from a French manuscript of 1870 shows not only his debt to the two great socialists, but also illustrates Bakunin's position, which was in a sense between them, although his ties to Proudhon were closer and more visible.

> As I told him a few months before his death, Proudhon, in spite of all his efforts to shake off the tradition of classical idealism, remained all his life an incorrigible idealist, immersed in the Bible, in Roman law and metaphysics. His great misfortune was that he never studied the natural sciences or appropriated their method. [Bakunin probably meant by this that Proudhon had not adopted the inductive method, but it is nevertheless ironic that he criticized Proudhon concerning this when he himself was untrained in the natural sciences.] He

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[9]Adamiak, "The 'Withering Away' of the State," p. 10.

> had the instincts of a genius and he glimpsed the right road, but hindered by his idealistic thinking patterns, he fell always into the old errors. Proudhon was a perpetual contradiction: a vigorous genius, a revolutionary thinker arguing against idealistic phantoms, and yet never able to surmount them himself. . . . Marx as a thinker is on the right path. He has established the principle that juridical evolution in history is not the cause but the effect of economic development, and this is a great and fruitful concept. Though he did not originate it--it was to a greater or lesser extent formulated before him by many others--to Marx belongs the credit for solidly establishing it as the basis for an economic system. On the other hand, Proudhon, when not obsessed with metaphysical doctrine, was revolutionary by instinct; he adorned Satan and proclaimed Anarchy. Quite possibly Marx could construct a still more rational system of liberty, but he lacks the instinct of liberty--he remains from head to foot an authoritarian.[10]

In such critical terms, Bakunin assessed two of his most important "tutors." Much of what both men wrote favorably impressed Bakunin, although there were other influences. For example, Georg Freidrich Hegel, Ludwig Feuerbach, Alexander Herzen, and Giusseppe Mazzini also had important effects upon his thinking.

Bakunin became an anarchist quite late in his life; it was after witnessing the crushing of the Polish Insurrection that he became receptive to the principles of Proudhon and the nascent anarchist movement. By the end of his life, he had redirected Proudhon's theories toward a more militant, activist, materialist, and practical anarchism, especially in relation to the

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[10]Michael Bakunin, Bakunin on Anarchy, trans., ed. and Introduction by Sam Dolgoff (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), p. 26.

working class militance of the late 1860's and the early 1870's.[11] He greatly expanded on Proudhon's basis of an anarchist social science so that he left a full-blown anarchist philosophy of social science with substantial content and fashioned a biting critique of the hierarchical social relations epitomized within the State. His work, however, has been largely disregarded by "mainstream" scholars and his impact on anarchist theory has been underestimated because the assessment of his thought suffers from the scholarly bias of a barricade stereotype to which scholars unfortunately seem to attach the greatest significance. This impression must be dispelled; Bakunin's revolutionary activities in no way diminish the importance of his writings, which were essential to the creation of a critique of the use and role of science and scientific social inquiry in both libertarian and authoritarian societies. His critical commentaries covered the Comtean positivists of his time, the bourgeois political economists, the philosophical idealists, and especially the "scientific socialist" followers of Marx and Engels.

As was true with Proudhon, a good part of Bakunin's thought was developed in relation to the socialist movement as much as in opposition to the capitalist order.

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[11]It is interesting that Proudhon's last book, written on his deathbed in 1865 (The Political Capacity of the Working Class), was in this vein.

He had seen state socialism in action in France in 1848, and from its failure, he later realized the necessity of anarchism, although his obituary of state socialism, in retrospect, was premature, since the "corpse" is very much alive today. Bakunin wrote:

> What succumbed in June 1848 was not socialism in general. It was only state socialist, authoritarian and regimented socialism, the kind that had believed and hoped that the State would fully satisfy the needs and the legitimate aspirations of the working classes, and that the State, armed with its omnipotence, would and could inaugurate a new social order. Hence it was not socialism that died in June; it was rather the State which declared its bankruptcy toward socialism and, proclaiming itself incapable of paying its debt to socialism, sought the quickest way out by killing its creditor. It did not succeed in killing socialism but it did kill the faith that socialism had placed in it.[12]

Thus, what is usually viewed as some form of promethean and romantic impulsiveness on the part of Proudhon, Bakunin, and other nineteenth century rebels was actually an acceptance of anarchism on the rather sound empirical grounds of having witnessed authoritarian socialism in action "against" the established state. Later, Bakunin developed his ideas of socialism and of anarchist social science in relation to the conflict with Marx and with certain authoritarian elements (e.g. the Blanquists) in the First Workingmen's International. At first, the libertarians (including Bakunin) and the state-socialists (including Marx) cooperated, or at

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[12]Michael Bakunin, "Federalism, Socialism and Anti-Theologism," Bakunin on Anarchy, p. 121.

least tolerated one another in the socialist movements of the 1860's. In many ways, the conflict that developed was an extremely personal one, but again, the personality clashes revolved around the much deeper issue of defining the nature of socialism and how it could be attained. Bakunin summed up his personal relationship with Marx during the conflict in the International by recalling his meeting with Marx the emigré in Paris in the late 1840's.

> As far as learning was concerned, Marx was, and still is, incomparably more advanced than I. I knew nothing at the time of political economy. I had not yet rid myself of my metaphysical aberrations, and my socialism was only instinctive. Although younger than I, he was already an atheist, a conscious materialist and an informed socialist. It was precisely at this time that he was elaborating the foundations of his system as it stands today. We saw each other often. I greatly respected him for his learning and for his passionate devotion--though it was always mingled with vanity--to the cause of the proletariat. I equally sought his conversation, which was always instructive and witty when it was not inspired by petty hate, which alas! was only too often the case. There was never any frank intimacy between us--our temperaments did not permit it. He called me a sentimental idealist, and he was right; I called him vain, perfidious, and cunning, and I also was right.[13]

Though the conflict between Marx and Bakunin can be explained partially by divergences of character, the personal tensions between the two did not prevent Bakunin from recognizing the value of Marx's contributions to the socialist cause. Even in his most critical remarks

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[13]Bakunin, quoted in "Michael Bakunin: A Biographical Sketch by James Guillaume, 1844-1916," Bakunin on Anarchy, p. 25.

concerning Marx's personal actions (such as those written at the time of the First International), Bakunin acknowledged Marx's important intellectual achievements.

> Karl Marx, the undisputed chief of the Socialist Party in Germany--a great intellect armed with a profound knowledge, whose entire life, one can say it without flattering, has been devoted exclusively to the greatest cause which exists today, the emancipation of labor and of the toilers--Karl Marx who is indisputably also, if not the only, at least one of the principal founders of the International Workingmen's Association, made the development of the communist idea the object of a serious work. . . . His work on Capital, though unfortunately bristling with formulas and metaphysical subtleties, which render it unapproachable for the great mass of readers, is in the highest degree a scientific or realist work: in the sense that it absolutely excludes any other than that of the facts. . . .[14]

What split Marx and Bakunin certainly was not a result of the belief in the applicability of an economic and materialist critique of capitalist society. Rather, the crux of the disagreement between them was the debate concerning the complexion of a scientifically planned society--that is, how social science would be applied. Where Marx and Engels saw those who rejected the tenets of scientific socialism (as stated in the Communist Manifesto, such ideas as class struggle, inevitable revolution, and the reorganization of society through a dictatorship of the proletariat in a workers' state) as impractical utopians, Bakunin, like Proudhon, having

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[14]Bakunin, "Marx, the Bismarck of Socialism," Patterns of Anarchy, ed. Leonard I. Krimmerman and Lewis Perry (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), p. 83.

seen the effects of the state-socialist ideals in practice, saw the attempt to create socialism within a statist framework as impractical--the state-socialists were, in his view, the real "utopians"--and more important, as unethical because of the severe limitations that would be placed upon individuals' freedom. Bakunin viewed the early socialist movement with one major exception as largely unconcerned with what he held to be the most essential characteristic of socialism, free action. He wrote,

> In general, regulation was the common passion of all the socialists of the pre-1848 era, with one exception only. Cabet, Louis Blanc, the Fourierists, the Saint-Simonians, all were inspired by a passion for indoctrinating and organizing the future; they all were more or less authoritarians. The exception is Proudhon.
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> . . . Proudhon armed himself with a critique as profound and penetrating as it was merciless, in order to destroy their systems. Resisting authority with liberty, against these state socialists, he boldly proclaimed himself an anarchist; defying their deism or their pantheism, he had the courage to call himself simply an atheist, or rather, with Auguste Comte, a positivist.
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> His socialism was based upon liberty, both individual and collective, and on the spontaneous action of free associations obeying no laws other than general laws of social economy, already known and yet to be discovered by social science, free from governmental regulation and state protection. This socialism subordinated politics to the economic, intellectual, and moral interests of society. It subsequently, by its own logic, culminated in federalism.
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> Such was the state of social science prior to 1848.[15]

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[15]Bakunin, "Federalism, Socialism and Anti-Theologism," Bakunin on Anarchy, pp. 116-117.

What split Bakunin from the Marxian conception of socialism were basically the same differences that separated Proudhon and Marx. Where Marx and Engels felt that the uprisings and subsequent failure of 1848 justified their conception of socialism--specifically, the use of state power to create socialism--Proudhon and Bakunin felt that state socialism had revealed its bankruptcy. Later, when in 1871 the Paris Commune arose, the socialist factions were primarily under the inspiration of the federalist ideas of Proudhon's followers, and when the Commune was crushed, many of the victims of the repression were members of the anarchist wing of the International. However, Marx and Engels, thinking revolution imminent, republished their 1848 Manifesto at that time as if to prove their point about the necessity of stricter hierarchical organization--although they allowed that their work was outdated in a few respects--as opposed to voluntary federalism. But at the same time they bitterly denounced the utopian "anti-authoritarians" in the International, they were forced to praise the Commune's generally anarchistic nature in order not to be totally disregarded.[16] It is one of history's ironies that anarchism, labelled by many in the nineteenth

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[16]Nicholas Walter, "Biographical and Bibliographical Note," Michael Bakunin, "The Paris Commune and the Idea of State" (Lausanne, Switzerland: Centre Internationale de Recherche d'Anarchisme, 1971), p. 7.

century and today as a romantic and quixotic phenomenon, was actually the "practical" socialism at this crucial time in French history.

Influenced by the failure of 1848's rebellions, the conflicts in the International, and the heroic resistance of the Commune, Bakunin extended Proudhon's critique of authoritarian state-socialism, began to add additional dimensions to the foundations of social science, and commenced the formulation of an anarchist social science. He began his critique by describing what he called "the cult of the state," which was the criterion of division within the socialist movement as the major ingredient of certain kinds of socialism and as the impediment to socialism for others. In Bakunin's eyes, both forms of socialism were equally supporters of science, but one, the state school, had lost contact with science's proper function in the task of creating a just social order.

> The communists [Marxists] are supporters of the principle and practice of authority; the revolutionary socialists [anarchists] have no faith except in freedom. Both the one and the other, equally supporters of science which is to destroy superstition and replace belief, differ in the former wishing to impose it, and the latter striving to propagate it; so that human groups, convinced of its truth, may organize and federate spontaneously, freely, from the bottom up, by their own momentum according to their real instincts, but never according to any plan laid down in advance and imposed upon the <u>ignorant masses</u> by some superior intellects.[17]

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[17]Bakunin, "The Paris Commune and the Idea of State," p. 2.

In Bakunin's view, the reconstruction of society to meet the scientific demands of a socialist society meant that necessity must determine the forms of life, rather than some central principle and human authority--people would join together naturally in order to best meet their needs. Bakunin, like Proudhon, felt that the creation of socialism was too monumental an undertaking to be handled by any one group or formula--even science--other than by the whole people.

> . . . equality must be established in the world by the spontaneous organization of work and of the collective ownership of producers' associations, freely organized and federated in communes, by the equally spontaneous federation of these communes, but not by the overriding and enslaving activity of the state.[18]

As Proudhon put it, "The laws of necessity" would create their own order. Bakunin's socialism entailed free-forming, self-regulating communities of labor in which necessity would be met collectively. His conception of socialism was quite similar to Proudhon's and his critique of Marx's socialism starts from the same point as the latter's, viewing such socialism as being based on a narrow fiction--that of the beneficial potential of the state structure. Scientific socialism meant more to him than the rule of science or of a class: The rationalization of an economy by any technical elite--revolutionary vanguard--

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[18]Bakunin, "The Paris Commune," p. 1.

be it the scientist-priests of the positivist "Religion of Humanity" or the politico-scientists of a "temporary dictatorship"--would not automatically liberate individuals. For socialism to be realized, science--"the laws of necessity itself"--had to be inherent in the productive process and never separate from it. For Bakunin, as for Proudhon, necessity refined its own function, eliminating the need for a Saint-Simonian Directorate fashioned into a "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" to construct socialism. Socialism was not a plan that once correctly expounded and properly directed would automatically be ensured of success. It had to be protected not from the "instinctive" action of the masses of people--Bakunin believed that necessity would generate both an organic order and the means of protecting the socialist revolution--but from the efforts of elites to impose "re-education" on them, since such action would be antithetical to the spirit and meaning of socialism, equality and freedom.[19] Here,

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[19]The question is sometimes raised by anarchists and non-anarchists alike concerning Bakunin's own conception of a revolutionary vanguard and its function. Realizing that the people are susceptible to manipulation during any revolution, he advocated the pre-revolutionary establishment of a secret network of activists whose task would be to prepare the masses for revolution and to fight with them. They would seek no power for themselves and would always work towards returning all power to the grass-roots organizations spontaneously created by the revolution itself. Despite Bakunin's insistence that the efforts of these revolutionaries would never be <u>imposed</u>,

Bakunin came into conflict with Marxian socialism's conception of a revolutionary state. Prophetically, he wrote:

> But in the People's state of Marx there will be we are told, no privileged class at all. All will be equal, not only from the juridical and political point of view, but from the economic point of view. At least that is what is promised, though I doubt very much, considering the manner in which it is being tackled and the course it is desired to follow, whether that promise could ever be kept. There will therefore be no longer any privileged class, but there will be a government, and, note this well, an extremely complex government, which will not content itself with governing and administering the masses politically, as all governments do today, but which will also administer them economically, concentrating in its own hands the production and the just division of wealth, the cultivation of land, the establishment and development of factories, the organization and direction of commerce, finally the application of capital to production by the only banker, the State. All that will demand an immense knowledge and many 'heads overflowing with brains' in this government. It will be a sign of scientific

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this concept does pose some difficult problems concerning elitism, the nature of "true" consciousness, the destruction of spontaneity, infiltration by opportunist authoritarian groups, etc. These things are still debated within the anarchist movement. Yet, as Sam Dolgoff shows in his excellent discussion of this question, it is also true that this particular part of Bakunin's program has been overemphasized by some historians. Says Dolgoff, "It is true that the internal Brotherhood rules [the code Bakunin wrote in 1865 for one of his abortive "secret networks"] constituted a violation of Bakunin's own anarchist principles, but to stress this contradiction as the essence of Bakunin's doctrine is a gross distortion." Furthermore, it is too often forgotten that in his time, all revolutionary groups had to operate secretly, so that such rules of conduct for their members were seen as a safeguard for their survival, and that in the early 1860's, when he was most enthusiastic in his advocacy of the secret organization of revolutionaries, he was only beginning to develop his anarchist ideas. See Sam Dolgoff's Introduction, Bakunin on Anarchy, pp. 8-13.

> intelligence, the most aristocratic, despotic, arrogant and contemptuous of all regimes. There will be a new class, a new hierarchy of real and pretended scientists and scholars, and the world will be divided into a minority ruling in the name of knowledge and an immense ignorant majority. And then, woe betide the mass of ignorant ones.[20]

In Bakunin's opinion, the authoritarian socialists had lost sight of the socialist function of science because they were willing to see it used as a force ruling over life instead of as a liberating part of life. Revolutionary reconstruction had to mean qualitatively more than a new oppression labelled "socialism." Such socialism would be no more than a fixed abstraction, an arbitrary social physics prescribing individual and collective diversity. Bakunin reacted to this conception with a critique similar to that which he made concerning the mystical conceptions of religious and capitalist privilege and property: Projecting the best human qualities into an abstraction, be it a god or some supra-human construction, leaves humanity in a subservient position--"God being everything, the real world and man are nothing."[21] Science separated from common social realities would have to be tyrannical. It is here that Bakunin began to build his philosophy of social science, with the first

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[20]Michael Bakunin, "Marx, the Bismarck of Socialism," Patterns of Anarchy, ed. Krimmerman and Perry, p. 87.

[21]Michael Bakunin, God and the State, Introduction by Paul Avrich (New York: Dover Books, 1970), p. 24.

requirement of good social science being the universal propagation of scientific knowledge and its integration into everyday life. At the time, there were those who were attempting to use science in a social fashion (notably the Comteans and the Malthusians) but who, according to Bakunin, were neglecting the fact that science is by its nature quite limited and that recognition of this social fact is critical to the effective reorganization of society. The philosophy of science motivating this critique stems from Bakunin's theory of human consciousness, which, like Proudhon's, saw humans as becoming more aware of the potential within themselves as humanity evolves--i.e., become conscious of their own actions. According to Bakunin,

> Man, a wild beast, cousin of the gorilla, has emerged from the profound darkness of animal instinct into the light of the mind, which explains in a wholly natural way all his past mistakes and consoles us for his present errors.[22]

However, science, by its very nature a reflection of human consciousness, has within it an intrinsic flaw: Science can never grasp the particular. It can work only with generalities. Science, in Bakunin's view,

> . . . is as incapable of grasping the individuality of a man as that of a rabbit, being equally indifferent to both. Not that it is ignorant of the principle of

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[22]Michael Bakunin, Bakunin, ed. G.P. Maximoff (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1964), p. 173.

> individuality: it conceives it perfectly as principle, but not as fact.[23]

That is, it cannot distinguish between individuals, for if it attempted this, it would destroy its very nature, which is necessarily abstraction and generalization.

> What does it [science] care for the particular conditions [of individuals]. . . ? It would make itself ridiculous, it would abdicate, it would annihilate itself, if it wished to concern itself with them otherwise than as examples in support of its eternal theories. And it would be ridiculous to wish it to do so, for its missions lie not there. It cannot grasp the concrete; it can move only in abstractions. [Italics mine] Its mission is to busy itself with the situation and the general conditions of the existence and development, either of the human species in general, or of such a race, such a people, such a class or category of individuals; the general causes of their prosperity, their decline, and the best general methods of securing their progress in all ways. Provided it accomplishes this task broadly and rationally, it will do its whole duty and it would be really unjust to expect more of it.[24]

Science, by its nature limited in function, therefore must be limited in its application to social life.

> The mission of science is, by observation of the general relations of passing and real facts, to establish the general laws inherent in the development of the phenomena of the physical and social world; it fixes, so to speak, the unchangeable landmarks of humanity's progressive march by indicating the general conditions which it is necessary to rigorously observe and always fatal to ignore or forget. In a word, science is the compass of life, but it is not life. . . . Science creates nothing, it establishes and recognizes only the creations of life.[25]

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[23]Bakunin, God and the State, p. 57. [24]Ibid., p. 58.

[25]Ibid., p. 55.

Thus, in agreement with Marx and Comte, Bakunin recognized science as a progressive and invaluable tool, but cautioned that it was only an abstraction of the real--life itself. Science, being external to life, has to be limited to its proper concerns if violence and other disasters are to be avoided. Unlike Marx and Comte, Bakunin did not believe that life could be enhanced by immutable laws of social physics, since humans could not benefit by considering themselves abstract qualities. Thus, any social science seeking fixed formulations of the way to govern and build socialist society would necessarily destroy the essential content of socialism, the free and unique individual member of the community. The result of excessive scientization would be that humans made to conform to externally created "laws of scientific socialism" would constitute what would be called in modern terms a conditioned socialist society, a low-grade social system resembling an ant-colony more than a conscious human community.

The socialist revolution could not be a plan for abstract freedom, however scientifically conceived. Bakunin viewed it instead as simply the culmination of the creative acts and impulses of many persons, "known" and "unknown," joining together to consciously shape their own history, and social reconstruction after the revolution would have to proceed from the same assumption.

" . . . History is made, not by abstract individuals, but by acting, living and passing individuals. Abstractions advance only when borne forward by real men."[26] Ideals are thus humanly realized. The problem, however, is how this should be accomplished. The favored proposed solution of the educated strata of Bakunin's time, a government in the name of science, would become a tyranny of abstraction in practice, for it would command and restrict human action by means of the finite formulae of science's "interpreters." The latter would inevitably constitute an elite by virtue of their claim to superior knowledge and the power to enforce their wisdom. For Bakunin, any group in such a privileged position, regardless of its function, would become hierarchically structured and motivated towards a tyranny even if it held humanistic goals and proclaimed noble purposes. Science (as any other ideal) imposed by an elite would tend toward domination in practice

> . . . in the first place, because, constituted outside of life, it is represented by a privileged body; and in the second place, because thus far it has posited itself as an abolute and final object of all human development.[27]

Science itself is not inherently dysfunctional in Bakunin's view. Rather, humans make science what it is:

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[26]Bakunin, God and the State, p. 58.

[27]Ibid., p. 60.

If it becomes tyrannical, then it is a human fault since the natural limits of science are transgressed by what he called "the cult of authority"--that is, those who look to leaders, de facto elites, and/or power to impose solutions upon the "unenlightened masses." This "cult," which tends to propagate a belief in one universally valid methodology for solving social problems, is consequently inclined to focus upon a given abstraction as a panacea. Referring specifically to the authoritarian socialists, whom he regarded as exemplary of this phenomenon, Bakunin pointed out that at that historical moment, they had established the concept of science as the absolute cure-all, making it a fetish simulating in substance and function the religious Ideal of the non-revolutionary past. An underlying fallacy, though, is that humans are not abstractions by virtue of their physical existence, the highly diverse demands of which do not necessarily conform to precepts formulated as rigid laws of conduct.[28] Furthermore, Bakunin asserted that there was an outstanding contradiction in the authoritarian socialists' scientific vision, which would negate free human action--the essence of any socialist revolution--in order to provide economic security. Bakunin's own concept of socialism allowed for no

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[28]Bakunin included in this criticism not only the state socialists, but also all who would "decree" the good society's construction.

compromise with liberty, even by a fully developed science of society; paternalism, coercion, or any kind of hierarchical socialism was wholly unacceptable to him.

> . . . the State, representing as it does the public welfare or common interest of all, curtails part of the liberty of each for the sake of assuring to him all the remainder. But this remainder may be a form of security; it is never liberty. Liberty is indivisible; one cannot curtail a part of it without killing all of it. This little part you are curtailing is the very essence of my liberty; it is all of it.[29]

Thus Bakunin's analysis of the social repercussions of the use of science in the creation of socialism interlocks with his critique of authoritarian socialism.

We must remember that Bakunin's philosophy of science and social science did not imply a rejection of science within the structures of libertarian socialism. Science, he insisted, was essential to any society aiming to satisfy all of its members' needs. The crucial problem for him was to recognize and respect science's limits. In Bakunin's own words:

> On the one hand, science is indispensable to the rational organization of society; on the other, being incapable of interesting itself in that which is real and living, it must not interfere with the real or practical organization of society.[30]

Here, we must go beyond the critique of science in authoritarian socialism and examine more closely the

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[29]Michael Bakunin, "Federalism, Socialism and Anti-Theologism," Bakunin on Anarchy, p. 129.

[30]Bakunin, God and the State, p. 62.

more "positive" aspects of anarchist social science as developed by Bakunin.

We have seen that as "scientific" as he wished socialism to be, Bakunin steadfastly refused to recognize science as the proper governing force in society. He had complete faith in the ability of human adults to regulate their own lives and to live together harmoniously and productively in the absence of imposed force and abstraction. The vital element required for this was for him the freedom of the individual, which

> instead of stopping far from the freedom of others as before a frontier, sees on the contrary the cementing and expansion into the infinity of its own free will, the unlimited freedom of all--freedom through solidarity, freedom which triumphs over brute force and over the principle of authoritarianism, the ideal expression of that force which after the destruction of all terrestial and heavenly idols will find and organize a new world of individual mankind upon the ruins of all churches and states.[31]

Thus the primary value and characteristic of Bakunin's system was its pervasive libertarian spirit, which Bakunin held was the sole force capable of creating (just) order and liberating humans to achieve their creative potential. As he put it,

> . . . Life, not science, creates life; the spontaneous action of the people themselves alone can create liberty. Undoubtedly, it would be a very fortunate thing if science could, from this day forth, illuminate the spontaneous march of the people

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[31]Michael Bakunin, "Where I Stand," Bakunin's Writings, ed. Guy Aldred (New York: Kraus Reprints, 1972), p. viii.

> towards their emancipation. But better an absence of light than a false and feeble light, kindled only to mislead those who follow it. After all, the people will not lack light. Not in vain have they traversed a long historic career, and paid for their errors by centuries of misery. The practical summary of their painful experiences constitutes a sort of traditional science, which in certain respects is worth as much as theoretical science.[32] [Italics mine]

This passage indicates that Bakunin's conception of science encompassed an extremely broad range of human experience, focused upon the material and popular aspects of science, disavowed elitism, and subordinated all science to the propagation of liberty. Science had to be part of the everyday human efforts to meet necessity. The socialism that would emerge from the libertarian "science of society," rather than being a new order regulated by a revolutionary vanguard, would be a conscious creation of all rational beings. This libertarian--anarchist--social science would help bring about the development of socialist society, which in turn would further transform natural and social science so as to ground them firmly in the material world. The dialectical process of "materializing" science, Bakunin held, was a crucially important one, for

> The world of scientific abstraction is not revealed; it is inherent in the real world, of which it is only the general or abstract expression and

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[32]Bakunin, God and the State, pp. 63-64.

> representation. As long as it forms a separate region, specifically represented by the savants as a body, this ideal world threatens to take the place of a good God to the real world, reserving for its licensed representatives the office of priests. That is the reason why it is necessary to dissolve the special social organization of the savants by general instruction, equal for all in all things in order that the masses, ceasing to be flocks led and shorn by privileged priests, may take into their hands the direction of their own destinies.[33]

A socialist society true to its liberatory rhetoric must demand that science be of the people and for the people in the most literal sense. Bakunin saw it as the function of an anarchist social science to propagate natural and social facts so that each individual may be adequately prepared to meet necessity in a rational fashion by creating a self-actualizing community. Science in general would flower only when it ceased to serve the interests of an elite class and assumed a role beneficial to everyone.[34] Once freed from class interests, science,

> . . . the patrimony of everybody, will wed itself in a certain sense to the immediate and real life of each. It will gain in utility and grace what it loses in pride, ambitions, and doctrinaire pedantry. This, however, will not prevent men of genius, better organized for scientific speculation than the majority of their fellows, from devoting themselves exclusively to the cultivation of the sciences, and rendering

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[33]Bakunin, God and the State, p. 62.

[34]Not only scientific knowledge, but also such attributes as artistic and poetic sentiment, poise, literacy, etc. would become common among the people, instead of being "monopolized" as privileges of the elite segment(s). Bakunin saw the latter situation as existing in his own time.

> great services to humanity. Only, they will be ambitious for no other social influence than the natural influence exercised upon its surroundings by every superior intelligence, and for no other reward than the high delight which a noble mind always finds in the satisfaction of a noble passion.[35]

Through what Bakunin felt was the "fraternal" instruction of the people in the ways of science, science would find itself in the milieu of human equality, solidarity, and sociability. Science would become the means for the achievement of a much higher goal than had ever before been set--that is, the complete humanization of "the real individuals who are born, who live, and who die, on earth."[36] He viewed science as becoming a bond between all persons and common to all functions of socialist society that embodies a reasoned consciousness of physical existence. As such, science in a (libertarian) socialist society makes possible a unity of function and purpose in all aspects of living and for every individual.

Proudhon had insinuated and Bakunin said that anarchist forms of science have to rest on a new form of authority. The latter, defining authority as "the inevitable power of natural laws which manifest themselves in the necessary concatenation and succession of phenomena in the physical and social world"[37] against which it is

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[35]Bakunin, God and the State, p. 63. [36]Ibid., p. 60.

[37]Ibid., p. 28.

impossible to revolt, advocated the acceptance of this "natural authority" as the sole type compatible with anarchist society. In practice, it would constitute a functional and non-coercive authority. As Bakunin put it,

> I bow before the authority of special men because it is imposed upon me by my own reason. I am conscious of my inability to grasp, in all its details and positive developments, any very large portion of human knowledge. The greatest intelligence would not be equal to a comprehension of the whole. Thence results, for science as well as for industry, the necessity of the division and association of labor. I receive and I give--such is human life. Each directs and is directed in his turn. Therefore there is no fixed and constant authority, but a continual exchange of mutual, temporary, and above all, voluntary authority and subordination.[38]

> We accept all natural authorities and all influences of fact, but none of right; for every authority or every influence of right, officially imposed as such . . . would inevitably impose on us . . . slavery and absurdity.[39]

In Bakunin's conception of socialism, then, the authority of function is the only permissible social limit on science and social science, as this authority is the only

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[38]Bakunin, God and the State, p. 28. "Yes, we are absolutely the slaves of these laws. But in such slavery there is no humiliation, or rather, it is not slavery at all. For slavery supposes an external master, a legislator outside of him whom he commands, while these laws are not outside of us; they are inherent in us; they constitute our being, our whole being, physically, intellectually, and morally; we live, we breathe, we act, we think, we wish only through these laws. Without them we are nothing, we are not." Ibid.

[39]Ibid., p. 35.

type in accordance with the demands of the material world. He attempted to explicate the concept of legitimate authority as being inherent in the knowledge garnered from the people's experiences in meeting necessity (in Aristotelian terms, a type of "common wisdom"). Such authority, the basis of any libertarian socialist order, also constitutes the foundation of the new form of science.

> Science, being called upon to henceforth represent society's collective consciousness, must really become the property of everybody. Thereby, without losing anything of its universal character . . . and while continuing to concern itself exclusively with general causes, the conditions and fixed relations of individuals and things, it will become one in fact with the immediate and real life of all individuals.[40]

It is clear now that the goals of the social science rooted in the above assumptions are necessarily oriented to praxis. Social science must investiage

> . . . the general causes of individual suffering--among these causes it will not forget the immolation and subordination (still too frequent alas!) of living individuals to abstract generalities--at the same time showing us the general conditions necessary to the real emancipation of the individuals living in society. That is its mission, those are its limits, beyond which the action of social science can only be impotent and fatal.[41]

It is here that the explication of Bakunin's thought must stop and the relation of his thought to anarchist social science in general and the anarchist

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[40]Bakunin, God and the State, p. 62. [41]Ibid., p. 61.

movement must be explored. His work, unfortunately, was not seriously enough regarded nor was it built upon and expanded by his immediate historical successors in the anarchist movement. During the 1870's and 1880's, the anarchist critique of science and its social uses degenerated to the point where there was a strong implication that anarchists had science on their side and that the authoritarian socialists did not simply because they were not anarchists. Anarchism was all too often posited as being equivalent to science.

Bakunin, who had an overly Newtonian conception of pure science, viewed the true science of society as an unchangeable perspective entailing a body of universal, eternal, and objective natural laws. Accepting a social science thus defined implied an acceptance of certain wisdom and its authority beyond the limits of anarchism. Thus, we find an irresolvable contradiction in Bakunin's scientific thought. Oddly enough, however, Bakunin's rather conventional philosophy of science in this aspect did not significantly hamper his developing an incisive anarchist critique of the role and function of science in building socialist society. Despite his Newtonian bias, he was able to see the authoritarian tendencies latent in a universalistic approach to science and to caution against the <u>rule</u> of laws of social matter. Just as the law of gravity does not <u>make</u> rocks fall--it is only an abstraction

of real instance--, the laws of scientific social knowledge can only abstract the meaning of freedom. Bakunin realized well in advance of other socialists and his fellow anarchists in the nineteenth century (who somehow felt that science was "theirs" and that it would be automatically libertarian) that to believe excessively in the liberatory capabilities of science at the expense of other human ways of freedom was both unrealistic and dangerous. As he stated in a rather prophetic passage in relation to the legacy of tarnished promise of both natural and social science in our era,

> Though we may be well nigh certain that a savant would not dare to treat a man to-day as he treats a rabbit, it remains always to be feared that the savants as a body, if not interfered with, may submit living men to scientific experiments, undoubtedly less cruel but nonetheless disagreeable to their victims. If they cannot perform experiments upon the bodies of individuals, they will ask nothing better than to perform them on the social body, and that is what must be absolutely prevented.[42]

Unfortunately, all too often this is just what has not been prevented. His words have gone unheeded in our age of Skinnerian conditioned-response, behavioralism's value-neutrality, scientific socialism technocratism, etc. It is now easier to understand Bakunin's fears of the social use of science than it was in the nineteenth century, when the rule of science was largely a theoretical

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[42]Bakunin, God and the State, p. 56.

matter.

The development of anarchist social science was greatly advanced by Bakunin. Not only did he augment the body of "written" theory and develop anarchist thought in relation to the idea of science, but it was his influence that drew many persons--including a relatively large number of scientifically oriented individuals[43]--towards anarchism as a means of healing the social wounds inflicted by the Industrial Revolution and capitalism. Furthermore, he initiated the healing of the mind/body, reason/passions dichotomy within anarchist thought; this acceptance of humans' natural being has increased in significance in the anarchist paradigm since he wrote, as will be shown in the next two chapters. Finally, anarchism owes a substantial debt to Bakunin for his

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[43]Bakunin himself was the last of the nineteenth century anarchist movement's dialectical theorists; after him (and partially as a result of his work's rather scientific orientation), we see the rise of the anarchist theorist trained in the natural sciences. For example, Errico Malatesta and Carlo Caifero, both medical students, were "recruited" by him. Elie Reclus, an anthropologist, and Elisee Reclus, a geographer, were personal friends of Bakunin's and presumably became active in the anarchist movement under his influence. Giusseppe Fanelli, an engineer, became interested and active in anarchism during his acquaintance with Bakunin in 1865. Later, other anarchist "luminaries" such as Peter Kropotkin and Emma Goldman were favorably impressed by Bakunin's insistence upon the "practical" scientist, and utilized their respective scientific training (Kropotkin as a geographer, agronomist, anthropologist, etc., and Goldman as nurse and midwife) to support their anarchist ideas, which, at least in Kropotkin's case, had been formulated to a considerable degree by the scientific theory and experiments he had studied.

contributions to social scientific knowledge itself, many of which are reflected in his observation that " . . . Liberty without socialism is privilege, injustice; socialism without liberty is slavery and brutality."[44]

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[44]Bakunin, "Federalism, Socialism and Anti-Theologism," Bakunin on Anarchy, p. 127.

CHAPTER III

CRITIQUE OF SOCIAL DARWINISM AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ANARCHIST VIEW OF HUMAN NATURE

The Shift from Political Economy to Natural Science as the Model for Social Science: The Rise of Evolutionary Thought

We have tried to show how Proudhon and Bakunin modified bourgeois political economy and other trends of the social science of their era into a new philosophy in order to give a "scientific" support to their political and moral views of anarchism. Marx and the authoritarian socialists were, at least in this area of thought, rather similar to the anarchists: Economics was radical in the sense that it tried to explain the world in its own terms of natural reality and (thanks to the influence of the natural sciences[1]) universal law; as such, the developing socialist movement was able to adapt economic theory to its own construction of critical theory. Yet simultaneously, a new body of thought was developing which was to have the

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[1]Bookchin points out that in almost every period since the Renaissance, the growth of revolutionary thought has been strongly influenced by the natural sciences, often in connection with particular schools of philosophy. For example, astronomy had a huge impact during the Renaissance in that it helped dispel many of the superstitious ideas and heavily mystical worldviews of the medieval period. The result was the development of critical rationalism and modern humanism; this was reinforced by advances in mathematics during the Enlightenment. See Bookchin, Post-Scarcity Anarchism (Berkeley, California: Ramparts Press, 1971), p. 57.

profoundest impact on all social and hence anarchist thought during the latter part of the nineteenth century, and that trend was the rise of the concept of evolution. Thus far, we have been tracing primarily the development of social science largely in terms of a Newtonian conception of an external universal generalized law which, once discovered, could be used as a tool to either reorganize or reconstruct society for the benefit of all. The political economist--bourgeois, Marxist, anarchist, or whatever--looked for the economic laws that governed the economic movement of society. In economics and materialist philosophy, the early socialists sought to understand what they felt were the irrational functions of a capitalist system so that they could construct a new and more rational social order. The rise of evolutionary thought, however, was to have great repercussions on radical thought, for it made possible a qualitatively different paradigm for socialists and forced them to grapple with the philosophical problems it raised. Again, as we have tried to show with the origin of socialism and social science, no one person, or date can be isolated in relation to the origin of the concept of evolution. There was certainly quite a bit of evolutionary thought apparent in Europe before Darwin wrote his book on the origin of the species. Kropotkin, the noted anarchist who was also a renowned natural

scientist, in one of his more intriguing statements, wrote in his Ethics that the origin of social science as started by Smith and Comte arose from an evolutionist perspective of sorts.

> Already in the thirties the positivist philosopher Auguste Comte, and the founders of socialism Saint-Simon and Fourier (especially his followers in France and Robert Owen in England), endeavored to apply to the life of human societies the theory of gradual development of plant and animal life, promulgated by Buffon and Lanarck and partly by the Encyclopaedists. In the second half of the nineteenth century the study of the development of the social institutions of man made possible for the first time the full realization of the importance of the development in mankind of this fundamental conception of all social life--equity.[2]

An evolutionary consciousness had certainly been developing prior to 1859 (the publishing date of The Origin of Species) in many areas of Western thought other than natural biology; if one looks closely at the history of European thought, one can see that it has been pregnant with evolutionary conceptions in such matters as the progressive development of human societies, the human condition, and reasoned thought, especially from the Enlightenment onward. In Hegel's idealist philosophy and in Comte's positivist philosophy, societies developed from a less perfected form to a more perfect and complex stage of existence, as did human thought, which made this

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[2]Peter Kropotkin, Ethics: Origin and Development, trans. Louis S. Friedland and Joseph R. Piroshnikoff (New York: Benjamin Blum, 1968), p. 265.

progressive change in society possible. This impulse of thought within the evolution of society to reach complex reasoned ideals (ends) was not lost on anarchist thinkers, as has already been shown with Proudhon, who accepted the Comtean stages of progressive development of humanity and the Hegelian belief in a transcendence of instinct by conscious reason. Proudhon, although more Newtonian than Bakunin in his search for an immutable law of justice, nevertheless utilized the work of Georges Cuvier, the pre-Darwinian French naturalist who had greatly affected Comte as well. Cuvier held that the instinctual was the governing drive of all animal life; Proudhon was able to accept this, for Cuvier also felt that animals instinctually followed a leader, but as reason ascends in human development, the chief's importance fades and rationality becomes the significant ruling force. Cuvier's influence is apparent in Proudhon's thought concerning the development of society.

> Thus, in a given society, the authority of a man over man is inversely proportional to the stage of intellectual development which that society has reached; and the probable duration of that authority can be calculated from the more or less general desire for a true government--that is, for a scientific government. And just as the right of force and the right of artifice retreat before the steady advance of justice, and must finally be extinguished in equality, so the sovereignty of the will yields to the sovereignty of the reason, and must at last be lost in scientific socialism. Property and royalty have been crumbling

> to pieces ever since the world began. As man seeks Justice in equality, so society seeks order in anarchy.[3]

Thus, Proudhon used evolutionary thought (along with political economy) in his explication of the development of reason to advocate the creation of a scientifically based society without a state order.

Bakunin noted the contributions of Comte and Hegel to the integration of evolutionary thinking into socialist thought.

> It is curious to note that the order of sciences established by Auguste Comte is almost the same as the one in the Encyclopedia [of Sciences] by Hegel, the greatest metaphysician of past or present times, whose glory was that he brought the development of speculative philosophy to its culminating point, from which, impelled by its own peculiar dialectics, it had to follow the downward path of self-destruction. Between Auguste Comte and Hegel there was an enormous difference. The latter, true metaphysician that he was, spiritualized matter and Nature, deducing them from logic; that is, from spirit. Auguste Comte, on the contrary, materialized the spirit, grounding it solely in matter. And therein lies his greatest glory.[4]

The notion that human societies progressed and evolved from simpler to more complex and finally more human forms was thus prior to the development of explicit evolutionary theory in the natural sciences, but then, evolution, like any theory, arose from a definite conceptual matrix.

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[3]Proudhon, What Is Property?, p. 277.

[4]Michael Bakunin, The Political Philosophy of Bakunin: Scientific Anarchism, ed. G. P. Maximoff, Preface by Bert F. Hoselitz, Introduction by Rudolf Rocker (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1964), p. 74.

It is an historical irony that Comte's positivist philosophy and Hegel's dialectical philosophy probably made the acceptance and understanding of natural evolution and its application easier for radicals to accept, for the concept of evolution was unacceptable within the inductivist-mechanistic-predictivist model, adopted from physics, the science considered most advanced at that time, which was the common framework of most students of society. This paradigm, still in existence in "mainstream" social science, equates explanations with forecasts; therefore, theories which produce no predictions are assumed to be lacking in explanatory value and hardly qualify as "scientific." However, many important theories have offered no forecasts: Darwin's theory is an outstanding example. The latter, as Stephen Toulmin has shown, explains the origins of species by mutations and natural selection, yet makes no predictions. No scientist would use this theory to predict the evolution of new species; yet Darwin's theory is widely regarded as having a great deal of validity as an explanatory device.[5]

Darwin's theories did not fit the Newtonian conceptions of the philosophers of science or social science of the early nineteenth century (or for that

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[5]Stephen Toulmin, Foresight and Understanding (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), pp. 24-25.

matter, those of most social scientists today), but as science, it had value beyond its explanatory capabilities, which assured it an important place in Western thought. If Darwin's theory could not predict future species arising, it nevertheless was able to give credence to both status quo conceptions of social thought grounded in natural selection and tending toward the survival of elites, and revolutionary thought, grounded in a belief in the evolutionary capacity of humans and society toward a more perfect social organization and tending toward the survival of all the species. Evolution was already in the air, and in many ways, if a scientific theory of evolution hadn't existed in rudimentary form, it probably would have been developed anyway in an age that was so very much under the influence of science as both a means to and the equivalent of progress in human life, a belief which arose from the Enlightenment tradition of reason and science as the repository of ethical progress. Bakunin stated concerning Comte's evolutionary conception on the development of science, formulated in the lingering hope of the Enlightenment:

> The co-ordination of sciences established by positive philosophy is not just simple juxtaposition: it is a sort of organic concatenation which begins with the abstract science--mathematics, which has for its subject matter facts of the simple order, and gradually ascends toward comparatively more concrete sciences which have for their subject matter facts ever growing in complexity. And thus from pure mathematics one passes to mechanics, to astronomy, and then to physics, chemistry, geology, and biology,

> including here the classification, comparative anatomy, and physiology of plants, and then of animals, and finally reaches sociology, which embraces all human history, such as the development of the collective and individual existence in political, economic, social, religious, artistic and scientific life.[6]

The evolutionary "progressive" development even of the sciences, then, was not quite so alien to the nineteenth century thinker, even if it could not be acceptable within the bounds of the existing philosophy of science.

Despite his belief that science did transcend pure abstraction as it became increasingly grounded in the realities of daily life, Bakunin nevertheless perceived science as a universal and unchanging reality. Where he could grasp the Newtonian content of science and could critique it, he was never able to question its form: His criticism was directed not at its external-universalistic Newtonian formulation, but at its present and potential application by the powerful segments of society. Bakunin, however, was one of the most critical socialist thinkers of his day with respect to the question of the social uses of science, for there is very little nineteenth century anarchist thought questioning the inherent good of science. Rather, it was generally agreed that the development of science was an entirely beneficial phenomenon that would inevitably lead to the

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[6]Bakunin, The Political Philosophy of Bakunin, pp. 73-74.

anarchist social revolution.

By the time Darwin published his Origin of Species, the socialist movement was already receptive to evolution and somewhat oriented to its perspective. Marx's A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, which appeared in the same year, 1859, is more or less his outline of thought concerning the evolution of capitalism (this work was later expanded by him to become Capital). According to John Hewetson, a modern writer,

> Karl Marx . . . when he published his Critique of Political Economy in 1859, considered it an extremely lucky chance that The Origin of Species should have appeared in the same year. 'This wonderful work,' he wrote, 'makes my own absolutely impregnable. Darwin may not know it, but he belongs to the Social Revolution.'[7]

Marx wanted to dedicate Capital to Darwin for this reason.

> . . . and as Engels made clear in his speech at Marx's graveside, the comparison expresses a much deeper connection than this. In one of those profound and exquisite though often seemingly digressive footnotes with which Marx overloads Capital, he relates how Darwin first drew his attention to the 'history of natural technology,' that is, to the formation of plant and animal life. And he poses the question, 'Does not the history of the productive organs of social man, of organs that are the material basis of all social organization, deserve equal attention? And would not such a history be easier to compile, since, as Vico says, human history differs from natural history in this, that we have made the former but not the latter?[8]

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[7]John Hewetson, "Mutual Aid and Social Evolution," Anarchy 5 (September 1965), p. 258.

[8]Karl Korsch, "Introduction to Capital," Three Essays on Marxism (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), pp. 41-42.

Marx, Engels, and other early socialists (as well as liberals and some conservatives--e.g., Herbert Spencer, Comte, Thomas Henry Huxley) felt that they were involved in scientific construction of the social realm. Marx viewed himself, and Proudhon did likewise, as founding a socialist science of political inquiry. In doing this, discoveries in science or in other schools of social science were often used by them to support the scientific contentions of socialist thought, an endeavor which was reciprocal, for the various bourgeois schools of thought did the same thing (Max Weber, Emile Durkheim and John M. Keynes drew on Marx, for example).

Bakunin was no exception to the phenomenon of the scientific mystique, even if he was critical of the authoritarian application of science to human society, for his thought, as well as that of the other anarchists of his time, shows the impact of evolutionary thought as it was presented in Darwin's work. In his <u>God and the State</u>, in which he had done so much to debunk the myth of formula-ridden, universalistic and manipulative social science, Bakunin stated on the origin of human life:

> Yes, our ancestors, our Adams and our Eves, were if not gorillas, omnivorous, intelligent and ferocious beasts, endowed in a higher degree than the animals of any other species with two precious faculties--<u>the power to think</u> and <u>the desire to rebel</u>. These faculties, combining their progressive action in history, represent the essential factor, the

> negative power in the positive development of human animality, and create consequently all that constitutes humanity in man.[9]

It was through reason (the influence of Hegel and Proudhon is quite obvious here) that Bakunin believed that humans would transcend animalistic instinct and become rational social creatures--humans in a more perfect sense.[10] Darwin's "struggle for existence" fit as well into the economic parameter of Bakunin's anarchism as into bourgeois thought as a means of scientifically determining the true basis of human social life.

> Whoever has studied history even a little cannot fail to notice that, underlying all the religions and theological struggles, however abstract, sublime, and ideal they may have been, there was always some outstanding material interest. All the racial, national, State, and class wars had only one object, and that was domination, which is the necessary condition of the guarantee for the possession and enjoyment of wealth. Human history, considered from this point of view, is simply the continuation of the great struggle for life, which according to Darwin, constitutes the basic law of the organic world.[11]

> Considered from this point of view, the natural world presents to us a deadly and bloody picture of a fierce and perpetual struggle, a struggle for life. Man is not the only one to wage this struggle: all animals, all living beings--nay, what is more, all existing things--carry within themselves, although in a less apparent manner than man, the germs of their own destruction, and so to speak are their own enemies. The same natural inevitability begets,

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[9]Bakunin, God and the State, pp. 9-10.

[10]Bakunin was never the chastity-and-"sins of the flesh"-socialist that Proudhon was. Bakunin wanted an "informed" instinctuality, the passions liberated from blind and ignorant superstition. Being human ultimately meant both reason and body participating in social life.

[11]Bakunin, The Political Philosophy of Bakunin, p. 169.

> preserves, and destroys them. Every class of things, every plant and animal species, lives only at the expense of other; one devours the other, so that the natural world can be regarded as a bloody hecatomb, as a grim tragedy incited by hunger. The natural world is the arena of a ceaseless struggle which knows no mercy nor respite.
>
> Is it possible that this inevitable law also exists in the human and social world?[12]

These statements of "fact" could have been postulated by a Social Darwinist or a Marxist of the era whose belief was that the struggle for economic necessity was based on the need to preserve life--the basic law of the organic world. For Bakunin, through the use of human reason and the technology of science, a new social order could evolve which would wrest the means of life from the environment so that the minimal physical requirements--adequate food, clothing and shelter--would be universally met.

In short, Bakunin's solution to the inevitable "biological" problem was the solution of the social problem through the use of human reason and material transformation. Through the economic reordering of voluntary and communal cooperation and collective ownership of the land, the struggle for necessity could be vitiated and the twin struggles of natural history and of social history could be ended in an order of material plenty created by the labor of all. Marx and

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[12]Bakunin, The Political Philosophy of Bakunin, pp. 169-170.

Engels held a similar progressive evolutionary view but believed that state socialism could better determine the solution of the economic and social problem of necessity than could voluntary cooperation, for it was not only necessary to create material plenty but also to restrain the anti-social instincts in a humanity tainted by capitalist social relations to create communism. Engels stated it this way:

> The anarchists put the thing upside down. They declare that the proletarian revolution must begin by doing away with the political organization of the State. But after its victory the sole organization which the proletariat finds already in existence is precisely the state.[13]

For Bakunin, then, in humans evolution was becoming aware of itself, for of all the animal species, the human was the only one able to abstract him/herself in his/her own mind. Humans could separate their reason from the natural environment and thus could endeavor to create a society whose social life would transcend nature's adversity. Human history was the development of reason as the triumph over nature. In this matter, Bakunin was no different than Proudhon and was also similar to most other socialist and liberal theorists, differing only in his rejection of the assumption that the state and/or private property were needed as checks on anti-social instincts and the egotistical struggle

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[13]Friedrich Engels, Letter to Von Patten, Marx and Engels: Selected Correspondence 1846-1895 (New York: International Publishers, 1942), p. 417.

for survival.

It is here that it is necessary to begin to examine Peter Kropotkin's legacy to anarchism in developing an anarchist conception of social evolution which would be quite unlike previous views and which would no longer be a matter of a merely different interpretation of the same viewpoint of evolutionary theory. With Kropotkin, anarchism became more than a "rational" critique of the present and an anticipated future order resting on the rational faculties or even on Bakunin's "reasoned passions." It became anchored instead in progressive animal evolution and in animal life itself, which included instinctual and rational behavior. With Kropotkin, a great step forward was taken to heal the wound created by the Western mind/body dichotomy. No longer would it be necessary to transcend the animal nature in humanity in order to attain socialism. Where Bakunin believed that reason was part of the material realm and that the solution of the struggle for existence lay in the realm of reason, Kropotkin showed that both instinct and reason were eminently human and social, existing together of their own necessity, and that they were the natural basis of socialism. No longer would only the progressive development of reason be on humans' side, but so too would be the animal impulse of survival. Anarchism was to rest on a more naturalistic basis, and its social science

began to develop a new paradigm reflecting this change.

Kropotkin's Conception of Social Evolution and Mutual Aid

The work of Peter Kropotkin is outstanding in the history of anarchist thought, especially in the regard that he successfully integrated and reinterpreted evolutionary thought in such a way as to expurgate the Malthusian elements within it and to develop a completely anarchistic conception of social evolution and social life. Yet his perspective, of course, did not appear suddenly; its direct origins considerably predate it. Although Proudhon initiated the development of a conscious anarchist movement, it is necessary to find the roots of an anarchist perspective on evolution within the "depths" of the anarchist consciousness. Thus we must briefly move back in time to the late eighteenth century to William Godwin, the first thinker to expound a multi-faceted libertarian philosophy resting on secular premises.

Reacting against Hobbes' view of human nature and the less extreme guarded optimism of the liberal contract theorists, Godwin believed that society should be ruled solely by reason and, like the anarchists who were to succeed him, viewed education as the most important means of bringing about meaningful and self-actualizing change. For Godwin, the rule of political

force would become unnecessary in a society of reason, and a new economic structure would come into being naturally and harmoniously in such a society. In contrast to the liberals of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Godwin held that reason alone would be sufficient to modify or restrain passionate and unreasoned action. Thus he saw no need to limit human impulses by state action; reason could more than adequately create a good social life without the encumbrance of set laws and the coercive structures that always are required to enforce them. Godwin's philosophy of law--the focal point of his anarchism--is encapsulated in this statement from An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness (1793).

> Law is merely relative to the exercise of political force and must perish when the necessity for that force ceases, if the influence of truth do not still sooner extirpate it from the practice of mankind.[14]

As clearly as his ideas were developed, they had no direct impact on anarchist thought and the development of the anarchist movement. It was not until his work was "discovered" in the late nineteenth century by English anarchists (as also happened with the work of Max Stirner) that he was linked to the anarchist tradition. However, Godwin's thought directly influenced

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[14]William Godwin, "On Law" (excerpts from An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness) (London: Freedom Press, n.d.), p. 14.

the shaping of the English radicalism of the early nineteenth century, especially in the cases of Percy Shelley and Robert Owen. Yet his major effect was not to be recognized in anarchism until almost a century after Political Justice was written: It was Godwin who moved Reverend Thomas Malthus to write from a neo-Hobbesian perspective within the liberal philosophic fold in an attempt to refute Godwin's vision of rational anarchy, and in turn, Malthus' theories became basic to the Social Darwinist paradigm that Kropotkin's work challenged.

Thomas Malthus, creator of political economy's summa apologia for the inequities of early industrial capitalism, believed that what he saw in his own society was the reflection of the "scientific" reality of all human existence. Viewing the capitalist order as based on natural and scientific principle, Malthus posited the law of just retribution to be discoverable in operation. It follows that the so-called "injustices" of the prevailing system were due not to humanly-created structures, but were rather brought about by the natural misfortune of the human condition. Humans were seen as reproducing geometrically, like the proverbial offspring of Adam, while the food supply could only be forced to yield arithmetically. The strong, the intelligent--these survived and became the prosperous; the poor, the weak and the lame existed for the time, but due to a lack of

mental acuity and moral sobriety, had to bear the burdens of a hostile natural environment--i.e., hunger and deprivation. Malthus' theories quickly found favor among the circles of the upper bourgeoisie, for his was a morally assuaging message for these people, a resolution of the contradiction between some of their proclaimed ideals (e.g., the dignity of the human being, the right to life and liberty) and the realities of the order they supported. Eventually, Malthus' work had a profound impact on a whole generation of bourgeois political economists, philosophers and naturalists. Hewetson discusses this phenomenon:

> By a remarkable coincidence, both Darwin and Alfred Russell Wallace, who reached the idea of evolution taking place through natural selection almost simultaneously, started on this train of thought from the same initial stimulus. In his Naturalist's Voyage Round the World, Darwin relates how the ideas of Malthus set him on the track of Natural Selection.
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> ' . . . In October 1838, that is, fifteen months after I had begun my systematic enquiry, I happened to read for amusement "Malthus on Population," and being well prepared to appreciate the struggle for existence which everywhere goes on, from long continued observation of the habits of plants and animals, it at once struck me that under these circumstances favourable variations would tend to be preserved, and unfavourable ones destroyed. The result of this would be the formation of new species.'
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> Similarly, Wallace describes how, when he was lying ill with fever in February 1858, twenty years later than Darwin, he was thinking about the 'positive checks'--war, famine, disease--described by Malthus in his Essay on Population. Wallace felt that these 'positive checks' must act even more

> powerfully on animals than upon men because of their greater rate of multiplication. Thus both men began to speculate about selection after reading Malthus' book.[15]

Malthus' theory on population, then, lay within an evolutionary perspective in that society tended towards hunger and then a progressive equilibrium of the strong in its development. This belief had a profound impact on both the political economy and the evolutionary theory of the nineteenth century, as the "mainstreams" of both proceeded from the assumption that poverty, hunger, and disease were manifestations of an inevitable tendency for the population to be greater than the available food supply--the poor were simply those upon whom the "positive checks" were acting.[16]

Proudhon was one of the first socialists to criticize the "iron" theories of the Malthusian school of political economy which were widely accepted in France as well as in Malthus' native England. Proudhon's criticism was directed at the isolation of the individual in Malthusian thought, which he saw as aimed at destroying the solidarity of labor and at preserving the system of private property, as well as at placing the "blame" for poverty upon single persons rather than upon social

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[15]Hewetson, "Mutual Aid and Social Evolution," pp. 258-259.

[16]Ibid.

institutions; at the assertion that class division was eternal and inevitable; and at what he characterized as the erroneous idea that population and production cannot attain equilibrium.[17] At least as far as anarchists were concerned, Proudhon thus refuted the "scientific" pretensions of Malthusian theories of political economy and had showed that any society restructured with reason as its means of meeting the laws of necessity would render the Malthusian "laws" of class division obsolete.

The various Malthusian arguments defending the status quo with which anarchism would have to grapple were later garbed in the language of natural science. The social philosophy inspired by Darwin's work, because of the way it was stated, was almost universally considered scientific and could be accepted to some degree by widely differing schools of thought. For example, even with its Malthusian elements, we have seen that Bakunin was able to accept certain aspects of Social Darwinist theory as the truth of natural history and human development. His solution to the problem of restraining the voracious and anti-social instincts in humans was the progressive realization of community through an informed and corporeal reason. The human ability to abstract oneself and finally to become

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17See especially Proudhon, System of Economic Contradictions, pp. 66-67.

self-aware as a social creature was required to overcome the brutal "struggle for existence." Therefore, Bakunin's anarchism, although revolutionary in every sense of the word, nevertheless was blind to the infusion of Malthusianism into Darwin's work, which Bakunin accepted as completely scientific. It was Kropotkin who finally reassessed evolution's social biases in light of his findings in biology and ethnology and applied evolution in revised form to anarchist thought and the conception of an anarchist social science.

The impact of Darwin's work upon Kropotkin's developing anarchism both before and after he considered himself an anarchist was of great magnitude in both a negative and a positive sense, as can be seen in this statement from Mutual Aid:

> Two aspects of animal life impressed me most during the journeys I made in my youth in Eastern Siberia and Northern Manchuria. One of them was the extreme severity of the struggle which most species of animals have to carry on against an inclement Nature; the enormous destruction of life which periodically results from natural agencies; and the consequent paucity of life over the vast territory which fell under my observation. And the other was that even those few spots where animal life teemed in abundance, I failed to find--although I was eagerly looking for it--that bitter struggle for means of existence, among animals belonging to the same species, which was considered by most Darwinists (though not always by Darwin himself) as the dominant characteristic of struggle for life, and the main factor of evolution.[18]

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[18]Peter Kropotkin, Mutual Aid (Boston: Extending Horizon Books, 1970), p. vii.

Although his perspective was definitely evolutionary and although he was indebted to Darwin in many ways, Kropotkin nevertheless felt that Darwin often overstressed certain factors of evolution--especially that of individual struggle for existence within the same species--at the expense of other important factors. Darwin, he thought, never really sketched out all of the major implications within his theory. Furthermore, Kropotkin saw Darwin as never quite able to overcome the contradictory elements within his theory resulting from his acceptance of Malthusian philosophy. The problem, said Kropotkin, was that much of Darwin's natural history was in actuality a projection of the realities and anxieties of the existing social order into the natural world and the past. Concerning Darwin's last great work, The Descent of Man, Kropotkin wrote:

> He [Darwin] pointed out how, in numberless animal societies the struggle between separate individuals for the means of existence disappears, how struggle is replaced by co-operation, and how that substitution results in the development of intellectual and moral faculties which secure to the species the best conditions for survival. He intimated that in such cases the fittest are not the physically strongest, nor the cunningest, but those who learn to combine so as mutually to support each other, strong and weak alike, for the welfare of the community. . . . The term [struggle for existence] which originated from the narrow Malthusian conception of competition between each and all, thus lost its narrowness in the mind of one who knew Nature.
>
> Unhappily, these remarks, which might have become the basis of most fruitful researches, were overshadowed

> by the masses of facts gathered for the purpose of illustrating the consequences of a real competition for life. . . . He never wrote the work he proposed to write upon the natural checks to over-multiplication that would have been the crucial test for appreciating the real purport of individual struggle. Nay, on the very pages just mentioned, amidst data disproving the narrow Malthusian conception of struggle, the old Malthusian leaven reappeared--namely, in Darwin's remarks as to the alleged inconveniences of maintaining the 'weak in mind and body' in our civilized societies (ch. V).[19]

Darwin, in Kropotkin's assessment, was guilty of scientific oversight in allowing the Malthusian content in his theory to overcome the positive elements therein. His followers, however, were guilty of the more serious intellectual offense of using the content of Darwin's science as an apology for prevailing social conditions. Many Darwinists disregarded the scientific implications in Darwin's work so that instead of expanding upon it by further exploring various related hypotheses of natural development, they reduced the meaning of Darwin's theory, narrowing it down to eno-Hobbesianism, with individuals pitted against one another in the struggle for survival, "with the war-cry of woe to the vanquished, as if it were the last word of modern biology."[20] Kropotkin believed that this misconception of the evolutionary process was the result of biases embedded in the bourgeois view of social life which colored many Darwinists' scientific

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[19]Kropotkin, Mutual Aid, p. 3. [20]Ibid., p. 4.

vision and carried fallacious propositions into their scientific work.

With Kropotkin, anarchist social science extended its concern from the economic question to the even larger sphere of "the nature of nature," and the conflicts with both the schools of socialism and the schools of bourgeois political economy consequently took on new dimensions. Kropotkin endeavored to align anarchism with science, as Proudhon and Bakunin before him had attempted to do with the "science" of political economy. Kropotkin, however, with the abundance of new evidence available in the latter part of the nineteenth century, was able to provide a scientific base for anarchism far more effectively than were his predecessors. That he did this was fortunate for anarchism, for if it was to survive in the age of science, it had either to accept science as it was--i.e., accept Malthusian evolution and the Newtonian mechanistic view of society, and therefore undermine the most basic assumptions of anarchism--or to ground itself in a new epistemology. Kropotkin and other scientifically oriented anarchists of his era (notably Elie and Elisée Reclus) went beyond Bakunin's conception of science by questioning not only the uses of science, but also the content of what was labelled science. Although they continued to regard science as a "universal" ideal and to view it as the

force that would liberate humanity, they were able to recognize the ideological biases of the biological sciences of their time. This awareness led them to an acute consciousness of paradigm which ultimately resulted in the rejection of bourgeois interpretations of natural selection and human nature.

Kropotkin's research in biology provided him with the ability to formulate a new scientific base for anarchist thought.[21] Let us now examine more closely the context in which Kropotkin came to develop the concept of mutual aid as a significant factor in zoological evolution and consequently as a firm basis for the construction of an anarchist society.

What prompted Kropotkin's open conflict with the Malthusian evolutionary theory of his era was the appearance in February 1888 in Nineteenth Century (magazine) of an article on the social implications of

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[21]This is not to imply that Kropotkin's theory was entirely new in the historical sense. Scientific revolutions, like any thought, do not suddenly occur. Rather, they develop more-or-less slowly until one scientist, or a group of scientists, recognize anomalies as inherent in the assumptions of the "old" paradigm and thus must go beyond the existing framework to develop a new perspective on scientific problems. See Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962). In the case of Kropotkin, we find elements of his theory of mutual aid directly foreshadowed in the writing of Proudhon, Bakunin, Joseph Déjacque, the utopian socialists, and others of the early nineteenth century. However, it was Kropotkin who made the actual "breakthrough."

evolutionary theory. It was written for a popular audience by Thomas Henry Huxley, a leading biologist and a friend of Darwin's, as well as a great popularizer of the theory of evolution. The article, entitled "The Struggle for Existence in Human Society," provoked Kropotkin's ire both as an anarchist and a scientist, as it attempted to fit evolution into the "laissez-faire" political philosophy and economic assumptions of the time and to characterize the result as science. Kropotkin replied to Huxley in Nineteenth Century with a series of articles which would later become the book Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution and which constituted the basis of his last work, Ethics: Origins and Development.

Huxley's position, in brief, was of an extreme neo-Hobbesian and Malthusian bent, garnished with a pessimistic assertion of the superiority of the English people in their ability to triumph in the global struggle for existence. He defined the conditions of existence in terms such as these:

> From the point of view of the moralist the animal world is on about the same level as a gladiator's show. The creatures are fairly well treated, and set to fight--whereby the strongest, the swiftest, and the cunningest live to fight another day. The spectator has no need to turn thumbs down, as no quarter is given. He must admit that the skill and training displayed are wonderful. But he must shut his eyes if he would not see that more or less enduring suffering is the meed of both vanquished and victor.[22]

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[22]Thomas Henry Huxley, "The Struggle for Existence in Human Society," appendix B to Kropotkin, Mutual Aid, p. 330.

It is clear that the view of natural life had deteriorated from the one that was prevalent in the written works and hopes of the Enlightenment's humanist tradition. The vision of nature one hundred years after Rousseau, Paine, Jefferson, et al. was one of carnage, bloodthirst, unbridled destructive instinct. A "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short"[23] life was seen by Huxley as the basic fact of all animal existence. Gone were Rousseau's over-idealized noble savage and Diderot's Tahitians, replaced by a "natural man" of evil inclination and cruel action. Until the advent of civilization, said Huxley,

> . . . among primitive men, the weakest and stupidest went to the wall, while the toughest and shrewdest, those who were best fitted to cope with their circumstances, but not the best in any other sense, survived. Life was a continual free fight, and beyond the limited and temporary relations of the family, the Hobbesian war of each against all was the normal state of existence. The human species, like others, splashed and floundered amid the general stream of evolution, keeping its head above water as it best might, and thinking neither whence nor whither.[24]

In Huxley's Social Darwinist system, humans were by nature violent and anti-social beasts of prey who had to be restrained so that life could rise above the level of constant terror and misery. In true Hobbesian fashion, and not entirely inconsistent with the liberal belief of reason restraining the passionate senses as a

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[23]Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 107.

[24]Huxley, "The Struggle for Existence in Human Society," p. 332.

way of gaining ordered liberty, Huxley believed that civilization had to rest upon restraint of these natural "animal" impulses so that "survival of the fittest" could depend upon more rational and important qualities such as capitalist acumen. Because inherent in the animal nature of humanity there lurked a primal "heart of darkness," civilization had to mean the continuous renunciation of the beast in each person or at least the restraint of the openly animalistic behavior of those unwilling or unable to overcome their true nature. Accordingly, Huxley viewed human history as no more than a record of humans' efforts to escape their own biological being. Emerging from this analysis is a covert defense of Manchesterite (laissez-faire) liberalism.

> The first men who substituted the state of mutual peace for that of mutual war, whatever the motive which impelled them to take that step, created society. But, in establishing peace, they obviously put a limit upon the struggle for existence. Between the members of that society, at any rate, it was not to be pursued à outrance. And of all the successive shapes which society has taken, that most nearly approaches perfection in which the war of individual against individual is most strictly limited. The primitive savage . . . appropriated whatever took his fancy, if he could. On the contrary, the ideal of the ethical man is to limit his freedom of action to a sphere in which he does not interfere with the freedom of others; he seeks the commonweal as much as his own, and indeed, as an essential part of his own welfare.[25]

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[25]Huxley,"The Struggle for Existence," p. 332.

The vision of individuals divided and embattled against each other until the institution of societal restraint seems to have been the subconscious attempt of an apologist for the capitalist status quo to come to grips with the conflict between the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity--the heritage of the Enlightenment--and the problems industrial society had created. The tension created between the professed belief in the more or less spontaneous creation of society for the benefit of all as it had been put forth in the "social contract" theories and the realities of enforced subsistence for many within bourgeois society demanded a conceptual resolution: That which developed, as has been mentioned, was a neo-Hobbesianism. Where most of the contract theorists posited society as having originated in the willingness of equal and rational beings to come together for their increased mutual benefit, Hobbes had viewed any equality that existed in humanity as derived from the equal ability of individuals to kill one another and had seen society as held together by bonds of mutual antagonism. Civilization--any civilization--had to be better than the state of nature.

Social Darwinism revived and transported Hobbesianism into natural biology and from there reinfused European society with Hobbesian pessimism. With the latter nineteenth century's complex industrialism giving rise to vast industrial armies of proletarians

and conflicts and disruptions on a vast scale in the social life of all, it was generally conceded that progress and civilization could only result from restraining natural impulses. Clearly, Hobbes' theory of stifling innate tendencies to create order served the requirements of an elaborate justification of the status quo. Darwinian thought turned to Hobbes via Malthusianism for praxis in the political and social realm. Theory adjusted itself to the existing reality in its advocacy of a strong governmental structure to restrain the anti-social impulses of humanity and to socialize it, since the natural forces of famine, pestilence, and war alone would not suffice to insure a stable economic and social order. (Besides, continual struggle would seem to lead to chaos rather than order--an interesting contradiction in the Social Darwinist theory.) Yet even in this limited struggle for survival, the weak still had to die if the species were to survive--hence the "positive" Malthusian checks on human life. For example, the discoveries of science could yield modern sanitation methods, thereby limiting disease, but the overpopulation resulting from the lowered death rate would cause an increase in famine and war. There is little humanistic content in this, the message of Huxley, Darwin's friend and popularizer of Darwinian evolution.

Peter Kropotkin realized that such thought disguised as objective science, if it remained unchallenged, would reduce anarchism to impractical and anti-scientific romanticism. This view of natural biological reality, if it were true, would imply that anarchism was impossible, for once external restraint and coercion were lifted, individuals' natural ravenous impulses would surface. Kropotkin respected much of Huxley's work, but he realized how limited it was by its social roots and implicit aims. Huxley's elitist view conflicted with Kropotkin's personal scientific experience--Kropotkin, too, was "one who knew Nature"--which had to a large degree shaped his moralistic concerns. Like Bakunin, he wished to universalize science, making it part of everyone's existence.

> He who has once in his life experienced this joy of scientific creation will never forget it; he will be longing to renew it; and he cannot but feel with pain that this sort of happiness is the lot of so few of us, while so many could also live through it,--on a small or on a grand scale,--if scientific methods and leisure were not limited to a handful of men.[26]

The earlier anarchists' vision of the evolution of natural society differed little from contemporaneous bourgeois theorists' vision, as has been indicated

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[26]Peter Kropotkin, Memoirs of a Revolutionist, Introductions by Paul Goodman, Barnett Newman, and Georg Brandes (New York: Grove Press, 1970), p. 227.

earlier. Proudhon believed that early natural society was governed by instinct and that with human consciousness progressing towards reasoned self-awareness, no longer would external restraints on instinct be necessary. For Bakunin, natural society was not so much a product of reason as of an informed materially grounded consciousness encompassing both reason and the senses. Such a consciousness would free humanity from superstition, violence, and other instinctual "phantoms." Once unfettered by the abstractions of ignorance, the individual struggle for existence could be transcended, allowing a fully natural order to come into being. This would enable people to collectively create products to fully meet necessity and to thus control their own lives. In this way would freedom and social harmony be achieved.

Coming from the anarchist tradition, Kropotkin found it hardly acceptable for anarchists to adopt any degree or part of the Malthusian paradigm, which envisioned society as necessarily bound by hostility and suffering. Where Bakunin accepted the Social Darwinist view with a "Yes, but . . . "--the "but" being that a society congruent with reason and science would eliminate the causes of the rampage and plundering inherent in "the struggle for existence"--, Kropotkin, in contrast, was pushed by his studies of nature beyond

the bourgeois conception of evolution into an almost entirely unexplored area of evolution.

Early in his career, Kropotkin[27] began to doubt that individual struggle was truly inherent in nature as the universal reality, as the Darwinists postulated, and that it was a universal reality before the advent of socialism, as many socialists believed. What, then, were the lessons to be learned from Nature? It might be claimed that Kropotkin's anarchist beliefs compelled him to look for a social instead of a tooth-and-claw basis of evolutionary theory. However, while Kropotkin's anarchism may have inclined him to do further research, it did not lead him to his conclusions: Bakunin, for example, had avoided a confrontation with the Malthusian content within evolutionary theory by accepting it as true of the "state of nature" and to a lesser degree as also applicable to the pre-socialist era. As we have seen earlier, Kropotkin was involved in studying the

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[27]In this section, primarily Kropotkin's work will be examined, but he was hardly the only anarchist who approached anarchism through natural science. Elisée Reclus, a prominent geographer and winner of the Paris Geographical Society's gold medal for his ((La Nouvelle Geographie Universelle)) and his nineteen volume The Earth and Its Inhabitants, became an anarchist as a result of his research. Similarly, Elie Reclus, an anthropologist, found himself receptive to anarchist ideas while scientifically studying various societies. They and several of their contemporaries made important advances in scientific anarchist theory, but unfortunately, their works are not easily accessible in North America and in English, nor have these works been recently published.

social aspects of evolution long before he was an avowed anarchist. The work of the Russian zoologist Kessler helped give form to Kropotkin's nascent ideas on the social drives in natural animal life he saw in Siberia.

> Kessler's idea was that besides the law of Mutual Struggle there is in Nature the law of Mutual Aid, which for the success of the struggle for life, and especially for the progressive evolution of the species, is far more important than the law of mutual contest. This suggestion--which was, in reality, nothing but a further development of the ideas expressed by Darwin himself in The Descent of Man--seemed to me so correct and so great an importance, that since I became acquainted with it (in 1883) I began to collect materials for further developing the idea, which Kessler had only cursorily sketched in his lecture and had not lived to develop.[28]

Anarchism was not the sole factor motivating Kropotkin to disprove Social Darwinist contentions, for a truly scientific curiosity played an important role in the endeavor. As a young officer in Siberia, he had seen none of the violent intra-species conflict that had been proclaimed the condition of nature, and he came to realize that the question "Who are the fittest?" was actually an inquiry of great social and political import. Mutual Aid is his detailed answer to this question. Kropotkin's basis thesis is stated in the following passage from the latter work. He states that

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[28]Kropotkin, Mutual Aid, p. x.

if we ask the question,

> ' . . . Who are the fittest: those who are continually at war with each other, or those who support one another?' we at once see that those animals which acquire habits of mutual aid are undoubtedly the fittest. They have more chances to survive, and to attain in their respective classes the highest development of intelligence and bodily organization. If the numberless facts which can be brought forward to support this view are taken into account, we may safely say that mutual aid is as much a law of animal life as mutual struggle, but that as a factor of evolution, it most probably has a far greater importance, inasmuch as it favours the development of such habits and characters as insure the maintenance and further development of the species, together with the greatest amount of welfare and enjoyment of life for the individual, with the least waste of energy.[29]

Without positing the idyllic fallacies of some Enlightenment thinkers who exalted the "noble savage," Kropotkin began to pierce the ideological contradictions in Darwinist thought that were masked by the veil of science.

It was obvious to Kropotkin that sociability is as much a law of nature as is mutual struggle.[30] Why, then, did Social Darwinists place so much emphasis upon struggle within and outside of species, to the exclusion of the associational characteristic in nature? He saw both forces at work in nature at all times, their effects varying with the species, environmental conditions, and particular functions with which they work. Clearly, the "survival of the fittest" theory was inadequate as a general explanation of species evolution.

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[29]Kropotkin, Mutual Aid, p. 6. [30]Ibid., p. 5.

> . . . if the evolution of the animal world were based exclusively, or even chiefly, upon the survival of the fittest during periods of calamities; if natural selection were limited in its action to periods of calamities, . . . drought, or sudden changes in temperatures, or inundations, retrogression would be the rule of the animal world. Those who survive a famine, or a severe epidemic of cholera, or smallpox or diptheria, such as we see them in uncivilized countries, are neither the strongest, nor the healthiest, nor the most intelligent. No progress could be based on those survivals--the less so as all survivors usually come out of the ordeal with an impaired health, like . . . the garrison of a fortress which has been compelled to live for a few months on half rations, and subsequently shows a quite abnormal mortality. All that natural selection can do in times of calamities is to spare the individuals endowed with the greatest endurance for privations of all kinds. . . . 'Evil cannot be productive of good,' as Tchernyshevsky wrote in a remarkable essay on Darwinism.[31]

Thus, Kropotkin held that the Malthusian claim that hunger goads humanity on towards a development of strength, intelligence, agility, etc. rests on rather precarious grounds. Continuous crisis spells doom rather than the rise of "über-species." Those species whose members combine among themselves to secure food, ward off their enemies and/or protect their young are more likely to survive than are those in which individuals compete against one another for their needs. Kropotkin posited <u>that nature itself demands association and cooperation--mutual aid--for survival in the face of scarcity</u>. Only when an animal society ignores this is it doomed to

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[31]Kropotkin, <u>Mutual Aid</u>, pp. 73-74.

suffer a "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" existence. The predominance of social animals in nature, rather than of the rapacious species (whose numbers are far less) is empirical proof of this point,[32] which the Social Darwinists were nevertheless paradigmatically unable to recognize. After citing many specific examples of the social species which abound throughout the globe, he wrote:

> . . . how false, therefore, is the view of those who speak of the animal world as if nothing were to be seen in it but lions and hyenas plunging their bleeding teeth into the flesh of their victims! One might as well imagine that the whole of human life is nothing but a succession of war and massacres.[33]

If the most successful animals associate naturally for the sake of survival, Kropotkin wondered why "civilized" humans should prove to be the major exception to this; the cause of this, it seemed to him, was that their "social" system as it existed violated this "law" of nature. Rather than being intrinsically anti-social in the absence of external force or external stimuli, life is almost universally sociable to some degree, from the smallest unicellular creatures and plants, whose physiological structures demand at least anatomical association, to the highest mammals, whose sociability is highly developed.

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[32]Kropotkin, Mutual Aid, p. 38. [33]Ibid., pp. 39-40.

> Association is found in the animal world at all degrees of evolution; . . . in proportion as we ascend the scale of evolution, we see association growing more and more conscious. It loses its purely physical character, it ceases to be simply instinctive, it becomes reasoned. With the higher vertebrates it is periodical, or is resorted to for the satisfaction of a given want--propagation of the species, migration, hunting, or mutual defence. It even becomes occasional, when birds associate against a robber, or mammals combine, under the pressure of exceptional circumstances, to emigrate. In this last case, it becomes a voluntary deviation from habitual moods of life. The combination sometimes appears in two or more degrees--the family first, the group, and finally the association of groups, habitually scattered, but uniting in case of need, as we saw it with the bisons and other ruminants. It also takes higher forms, guaranteeing more independence to the individual without depriving it of the benefits of social life. With most rodents the individual has its own dwelling, which it can retire to when it prefers being left alone; but the dwellings are laid out in villages and cities, so as to guarantee to all inhabitants the benefits and joys of social life. And finally, in several species . . . sociable life is maintained notwithstanding the quarrelsome or otherwise egotistic inclinations of the isolated individuals. Thus it is not imposed, as is the case with ants and bees, by the very physiological structure of the individuals; it is cultivated for the benefits of mutual aid, or for the sake of its pleasures. And this of course, appears with all possible gradations and with the greatest variety of aspects taken by social life being a consequence, and for us a further proof, of its generality.[34]

Association for social purposes, then, appears in nature with much greater frequency than the Darwinists of this era were willing to admit or even to consider. Yet if the benefits of association and mutual aid were so commonplace in the animal world, why then were they so lacking in the human world? The Social Darwinist position

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[34]Kropotkin, Mutual Aid, pp. 53-54.

held a limited food supply to be the determining factor, and insisted that all creatures, in the face of scarcity, fight to the end for individual survival. This view, for Kropotkin, vastly oversimplified the operation of the natural selection process. Scarcity being a poor determinant of the best of characteristics and individuals within a species, animals have developed biologic responses other than starve-or-fight to avert extinction. Animals do not eagerly initiate internecine struggle in a difficult environment, as it is usually easier to move or to change their food source, or their method of gathering food; an anti-social drive is not rooted in the basic order of most of the animal world. Kropotkin added that not only do animals tend to avoid competition for food, but they also tend toward eliminating struggle within the species for any of their needs so that the species may survive and even increase in number.

> If the physical and the biological conditions of a given area, the extension of the area occupied by a given species, and the habits of all the members of the latter remained unchanged--then the sudden appearance of a new variety might mean the starving out and the extermination of all the individuals which were not endowed in a sufficient degree with the new feature by which the new variety is characterized. But such a combination of conditions is precisely what we do not see in Nature. Each species is continually tending to enlarge its abode; . . . physical changes are continually going on in every given area; and new varieties among animals consist in an immense number of cases--perhaps in the majority--not in the growth of new weapons for snatching the food from the mouth of its congeners--food is only one out of a hundred of various conditions of existence--but . . . in forming new habits, moving

> to new abodes, and taking to new sorts of food. In all such cases there will be, after a time, an absence of intermediate links in consequence of a mere survival of those which are best fitted for the new conditions. . . . It hardly need be added that if we admit, with Spencer, all the Lanarckians and Darwin himself, the modifying influence of the surroundings upon the species, there remains still less necessity for the extermination of intermediate forms.[36]

Survival of a species is thus dependent on a greater complexity of factors than a "gladiator contest," even when Nature is harsh.

His research led Kropotkin to conclude that there are strong indications that humans, who are not the swiftest, strongest, sharpest-fanged, or longest-taloned of creatures, must have evolved as other than Hobbesian ignoble savages. The reasons for humans' survival and their progress, according to the anarchist paradigm, will be revealed as we examine Kropotkin's conception of evolution as he related it to humanity.

Let us return briefly to anarchist thought prior to Kropotkin in order to clarify the earlier concept of human social evolution and relate it to Kropotkin's revised explanation. Picking up on Proudhon's work, Bakunin had held that before the rise of conscious reason, humans lack the reasoned consciousness necessary to sate the inquisitiveness concerning the hows of their existence. Thus, these mysteries could only be explained

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[36]Kropotkin, Mutual Aid, pp. 64-65.

by chimerical "abstractions" which were, at best, only haphazard guesses about the nature of concrete reality. Humanity unconscious of itself is yet unaware of its nature and potential. In Bakunin's conception,

> The example afforded us by children and young people, and even by many men long past the age of majority shows us that man may use his mental faculties for a long time before accounting to himself for the way in which he uses them, before becoming conscious of it. During this working of the mind unconscious of itself, during this action of innocent or believing intelligence, man obsessed by the external world, pushed on by that internal goal called life and its manifold necessities, creates a quantity of imagination, concepts, and ideas necessarily very imperfect at first and conforming but slightly to the reality of the things and facts which they endeavor to express. Not having yet the consciousness of his own intelligent action, not knowing yet that he himself has produced and continues to produce these imaginations, these concepts, these ideas, ignoring their wholly subjective--that is, human--origin, he must naturally consider them as objective beings, as real beings, wholly independent of him, existing by themselves and in themselves.[37]

It is with this incomplete--alienated--consciousness that humans had created both their earthly and heavenly gods. A system founded in abstraction gives rise to hierarchies of privilege, which are commands based on imperfect reason. Privilege based on ignorance has to be endured by humanity until the proper consciousness of self develops and is diffused amongst the masses so as to bring about a social revolution.

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[37]Bakunin, God and the State, pp. 66-67.

Bakunin's historical analysis held that

> Until now all human history has been only a perpetual and bloody immolation of millions of poor human beings in honor of some pitiless abstraction--God, country, power of State, national honor, historical rights, juridical rights, political liberty, public welfare. Such has been . . . the natural, spontaneous, and inevitable movement of all human societies. As we cannot undo it; we must submit to all natural fatalities. We must believe that that was the only possible way to educate the human race. For we must not deceive ourselves: even in attributing the larger part to the Machiavellian wiles of the governing classes, we have to recognize that no minority would have been powerful enough to impose all these horrible sacrifices upon the masses if there had not been in the masses themselves a dizzy spontaneous movement which pushed them on to continual self-sacrifice, now to one, now to another of these devouring abstractions, the vampires of history, ever nourished upon human blood.[38]

We have seen in Chapter II that Bakunin regarded socialism as the liberation of rational humans from direction and manipulation by external forces whose rule is sustained by significant remnants of the past--the ignorant thought and acts of uncultivated human nature. For Kropotkin and his anarchist contemporaries, their predecessors' conception of human history had to be modified to conform to advances in natural science, including the biological basis of sociality. Kropotkin apparently considered Bakunin's conception of the past as relying too heavily upon both the liberatory potential of socialist reason and the bourgeois evolutionists'

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[38]Bakunin, God and the State, p. 59.

paradigm of natural science. Armed with the data of ethnological research, the humanist thought of the Enlightenment ("noble savage") tradition was revived on a higher level by the late nineteenth century anarchist scientists seeking to discredit the image of the aggressive, possessive, atomistic "natural man" that most social scientists accepted at that time. Elie Reclus, who was a well known and respected anthropologist and an anarchist as well, stated that the study of past human life forms and of surviving primitives allows a new and realistic scientific "mind's eye" glimpse of the history of human evolution, which could yield much information about the present condition of humanity. He wrote:

> Our institutions . . . are not the product of spontaneous generation. They are derived from the human soul, which never ceases to fashion and modify them after its own image. Each one of us toils at this work during his day and generation until his breath ceases. The dust that we have quickened retains memory as long as the stream retains the reflection of its banks. Our whole being seems swallowed in forgetfulness. And yet we ourselves survive in all that subsists of the influence, oftenest the unconscious influence, we have exercised in the preservation and transformation of our surroundings. The passions that have thrilled us--our hopes and fears, our struggles, our victories, our defeats, all have left their faint and shadowy traces, indefinitely repeated by multitudes of our fellow-man from age to age, constituting laws and codes, religion and dogma, arts and sciences, and finally, the infursoria, whose remains harden into concreted rocks and are piled up in mountainous

> masses. From this point of view, ethnology has its resemblance with palaeontology.[39]

The social or anti-social roots of human animal nature, then, could be discovered by studying the "descent" of humanity from a social viewpoint as well as from that of physical anthropology. With this methodological advance, the anarchist conception of a social science at this time assumed a qualitatively new character. The origin of human social forms, as well as of social forms in other animal species, was to become an integral concern of anarchist social thought in its challenge to both bourgeois and authoritarian socialist contentions concerning human nature. The work of Alfred Victor Espinas (who also affected Engels, Lewis Henry Morgan, and others), proved especially useful to Kropotkin and Reclus in their studies of sociability in nature. Furthermore, the research of Henry Maine on the ancient law of the village (folk) communities in the Middle Ages and Morgan's ethnological work had great impact on the developing conception of social evolution in anarchist social science.

The ethnological work of the anarchists themselves--for example, Kropotkin's Mutual Aid and The State: Its Historic Role and Reclus' Primitive Folk--and the works

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[39]Elie Reclus, Primitive Folk, Studies in Comparative Ethnology (London: Walter Scott, 1891), p. ix.

of certain non-anarchists (Maine was a political conservative and Morgan was a liberal) showed that humans lived in clans before they lived in nuclear families. In contrast, the nuclear family was the starting point of civilized association in the neo-Hobbesian interpretations of Darwin, which pointed to the civilizing influences of the child-bearing female as the only check on the primitive passions. In Huxley's words, "Life was a continual free fight, and beyond the limited and temporary relations of the family, and Hobbesian war of each against all was the normal state of existence."[40] In opposition to this view, ethnology showed early human life in quite a different light. Kropotkin wrote,

> Man did not create society: society existed before Man.
>
> We now also know--and it has been convincingly demonstrated by anthropology--that the point of departure for mankind was not the family but the clan, the tribe.[41]

Anthropological evidence indicated that humans lived socially before they were divided by differentiation within social structures. The first human association, then, was a biological social fact rather than an anomaly. The social structure of these "primitive communists" was built upon

> Hunting and food gathering [which] were engaged in by the whole tribe in common, and once their hunger was

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[40]Huxley, "The Struggle for Existence," p. 332.

[41]Peter Kropotkin, The State: Its Historic Role (London: Freedom Press, 1969), p. 12.

> satisfied, they gave themselves up with passion to their dramatised dances.[42]

Unlike both Hobbes' ignoble savage and Rousseau's solitary noble primitive, early humans had to be (and still are where they exist) quite social in order to survive.[43] Primitive people, submerged in nature as they were, took their cues from the environment.

> The first thing which primitive savages must have learned about nature was that it represents a vast agglomeration of animal clans and tribes; the ape tribe so nearly related to man, the ever prowling wolf tribe, the knowing chattering bird tribe, the ever-busy ant tribe, and so on. For them the animals were an extension of their own kind only so much wiser than themselves. And the first vague generalization which men must have had about nature--so vague as to be almost a mere impression--was that the living being and its clan or tribe are inseparable.[44]

Living in the industrial age, with its system of nation-states, its highly competitive economic structures, its philosophy of atomistic individualism, and its inherent separation of humans from nature, it was possible for the Social Darwinists and those with similar conceptions to maintain that humans have evolved as basically isolated

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[42]Kropotkin, The State: Its Historic Role, p. 13.

[43]A fascinating anthropological account that provides evidence supportive of this idea is Colin Turnbull's The Mountain People (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972). It details the tragic consequences of the breakdown of mutual aid amongst the Ik, a hunting and gathering tribe of Uganda.

[44]Kropotkin, Ethics, p. 51.

beings. Kropotkin pointed out that

> For our Stone-Age ancestors, sociality and mutual aid within the tribe must have been a fact in nature so habitual that they certainly could not imagine life under another aspect. . . .
>
> The conception of Man as an isolated being is a later product of civilization--the product of Eastern legends about men who withdrew from society. To a primitive man, isolated life seems so strange, so much out of the usual course of nature, that when he sees a tiger, badger, a shrew-mouse leading a solitary existence, or even when he notices a tree that stands alone, far from the forest, he creates a legend to explain this strange occurrence. He makes no legends to explain life in societies, but he has one for every case of solitude. . . .
>
> Social life--that is, we, not I--is the normal form of life. It is life itself. Therefore, 'We' must have been the habitual trend of thought with primitive man, a 'category' of his mind, as Kant might have said.[45]

The question might be raised, said Kropotkin, that granting the sociability of "natural man," might not it still be true that there is present, as Huxley held, a ravenous nature, the "nature of non-civilized people, who tutored by Istar [Nature] . . . killed whomever opposed him, if he could"?[46] On the contrary, Kropotkin replied,

> Far from expressing contempt for human life, those primitive people hated murder and blood. To spill blood was considered such a grave matter, that every drop spilled--not only human blood but also that of some animals--required that the aggressor should lose an equal amount of his own blood.[47]

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[45]Kropotkin, Ethics, p. 60.

[46]Huxley, "The Struggle for Existence," p. 333.

[47]Kropotkin, The State: Its Historic Role, p. 13.

He saw a high respect for life amongst primitives and little evidence to support the contention that they are instinctively bloodthirsty. Recalling his journies as a youth, Kropotkin wrote about the "savages" he had observed.

> . . . in Siberia I often noticed the care with which my Tungus or Mongol guide would take not to kill any animal uselessly. The fact is that every life is respected by a savage, or rather was, before he came in contact with Europeans. If he kills an animal it is for food or clothing, but he does not destroy life for mere amusement or out of a passion for destruction.[48]

Early human history, then, was not a saga of ravenous slaughter, nor were early humans Bakunin's "omnivorous, intelligent and ferocious beasts" prior to the development of reason.

Unfortunately, primitive humans, though not ferocious, were (unlike the idyllic "noble savage") nevertheless capable of being quite contentious.

> . . . when tribes of different origin, colour and language met in the course of their migrations, it often ended in war . . . [but] even then men were seeking to make these encounters more pacific. Tradition, as Maine, Post, and E. Nys have so well demonstrated, was already developing the germs of what in due course became International Law. For instance, a village could not be attacked without warning the inhabitants. Never would anyone dare to kill on the path used by women to reach the spring. And often to make peace it was necessary to balance the numbers of men killed on both sides.[49]

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[48]Kropotkin, Ethics, p. 59.

[49]Kropotkin, The State: Its Historic Role, pp. 13-14.

Regrettably, mutual aid among primitives existed only within given tribes. Kropotkin felt that present "civilized" humanity has to widen this bond of mutual aid to fully realize human potential.

For Kropotkin, then, the ancestors of modern humanity, although somewhat quarrelsome, had inherited not only a social structure "anterior" to their own existence, but also the ability to create new forms of social (or anti-social) life, according to their particular needs. They could expand or decrease the degree of mutual aid generally offered within the human community. Kropotkin explained the dual tendencies of cooperation and domination operative in human society throughout history in this way:

> From all times two currents of thought and action have been in conflict in the midst of human societies. On the one hand, the masses of the people worked out, by their way of life, a number of necessary institutions in order to make social existence possible, to maintain peace, to settle quarrels, and to practice mutual aid in all circumstances that required combined effort. Tribal customs among savages, the village communities, later on industrial guilds in the cities of the Middle Ages, the first elements of international law that these cities elaborated to settle their mutual relations; these and many other institutions were developed and worked out not by legislation, but by the creative spirit of the masses. [One must refer to Mutual Aid to see all the evidence Kropotkin collected to prove his point about communal social organization.]
>
> On the other hand, there have always flourished among men shamans, wizards, rainmakers, oracles, and priests, who were the founders and the keepers of rudimentary knowledge of Nature, and the first elements of worship. . . . Knowledge and superstition went then hand in hand--the first rudiments of science and the beginnings of all arts and crafts

> being thoroughly interwoven with magic, the formula and rites of which were carefully concealed from the uninitiated. By the side of these earliest representatives of religion and science, there were also the experts in ancient customs . . . who kept in their memories the precedents of law. And there were also the chiefs of the military bands who were supposed to possess the magic secrets of success in warfare.
>
> These three groups of men formed among themselves secret societies for the keeping and transmission (after a long and painful initiation) of their knowledge and crafts; and if at times they opposed each other, they generally agreed in the long run; they leagued together and upheld one another in different ways, in order to be able to command the masses, to reduce them to obedience, to govern them, and to make them work for them.[50]

Exclusively held knowledge insured at least partial material security for a few and had the effect of dividing humanity into different classes. The group monopolizing the commanding positions in a class-divided society--be it a priest class or an organization of bureaucrats--held power through the possession of some secret craft or knowledge. This argument so far is rather similar to Bakunin's--i.e., that abstractions are used to generate and uphold the state structure, a society of subjugated humans.[51] Bakunin had cautioned that ruling savants,

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[50]Peter Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism (London: Freedom Press, 1912), pp. 1-2.

[51]To posit the state as the sine qua non of human existence is to ignore the history of statist society, which goes back, at best, only ten thousand years, while humans as we know them have existed for at least two million years, most of them without any form of state organization. See Mutual Aid and The State: Its Historic Role for further discussion of the origin of domination and exploitation in human social life, culminating in the rise of the modern state in the sixteenth century.

even in the age of reason and science, would use their knowledge to exploit the people and to keep them in ignorance. Furthermore, he saw a generalized reason as enabling the masses to break the "chains" of abstractions which bound them to the productive process as slaves rather than as freely willing producers. Humans, because of their animal origins and nature (unconscious of their own real existence and acting on instinct), were condemned to suffer throughout a history determined by ignorance until they developed the consciousness necessary for controlling their own fates. Kropotkin, because of his "new" anarchist social scientific view, denied that history had been a "continual sacrifice of the masses," for there had been some bright moments in the past when humans had attempted to live harmoniously, both instinctively and by a partially reasoned structuring of society. However, these social structures failed not only because of ignorance on the part of the people, but also for lack of sufficient material reward in life, which necessarily limited the benefits of living socially and hindered individual development. Under such conditions, the only way to attain a partially secure material existence was to plunder the wealth of others--one's happiness had to be another's pain. Kropotkin stated that the modern belief that only a few can live comfortably in any given

society is

> . . . a survival from those times when the powers of production of food stuffs and of all industrial commodities had not yet reached the perfection they have attained now. In those times communism was truly considered as equivalent to general poverty and misery, and well-being was looked at as something which is accessible to a very small number only.[52]

In the past, communism had existed as generalized material want in a society in which all survived but none lived in comfort or with individual sensual gratification. Poverty and the negation of pleasure--toil--had again and again generated the predomination of egotistical and brutish concerns in the communist brotherhoods and communal forms of the past so as to destroy them or to severely limit their development. Kropotkin, though (like Bakunin), saw the development of the new industrial technology as the means of anchoring socialism in material reality. For Kropotkin, need, once a

> . . . real and extremely important obstacle to communism, exists no more. Owing to the immense productivity of human labour which has been reached nowadays in all directions--agricultural and industrial--it is quite certain . . . that a very high degree of well-being can easily be obtained in a few years by communist work.[53]

In a libertarian socialist society, necessity would be met collectively for the benefit of all in a voluntary and spontaneous fashion. No managerial elite's plans

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[52]Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism (London: Freedom Press, 1912), p. 69.

[53]Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism (London: n.p., 1903; reprint ed. London: Simian, n.d.), p. 27.

would be imposed, as decision-making would be localized and communal. Kropotkin described the essence of anarchism in this passage from Modern Science and Anarchism.

> The anarchists conceive a society in which all the mutual relations of its members are regulated, not by laws, not by authorities, whether self-imposed or elected, but by mutual agreements between the members of that society and by a sum of social customs and habits--not petrified by law, routine, or superstition, but continually developing and continually readjusted in accordance with the ever-growing requirements of a free life stimulated by the progress of science, invention, and the steady growth of higher ideals.
>
> No ruling authorities, then. No government by man, no crystallization and immobility, but a continual evolution--such as we see in nature. Free play of the individual, for the full development of his individual gifts--for his individualization. In other words, no actions are imposed upon the individual by a fear of punishment; none is required from him by society but those which receive his free acceptance. In a society of equals this would be quite sufficient for preventing those unsociable actions that might be harmful to other individuals and society itself, and for favouring the steady moral growth of that society.[54]

Kropotkin believed that communality rested in human nature but that in the past, material scarcity had blocked the social drive in humans from fully flowering. However, with the development of modern technology, this basic social nature could surface to create a communal realm of plenty, providing the present order of social life--class divided society--was destroyed (most likely by means of a social revolution). Freed from the fetters of material want and the state which divides persons,

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[54]Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, 1903 edition, p. 12.

creates poverty by its inequitable distribution and otherwise controls life, humans would be able to turn their energies to their own creative needs and desires. This, in turn, would bring about further improvement of the material aspects of society.

> The most important economy, the only reasonable one, is to make life pleasant for all, because the man who is satisfied with his life produces more than the man who curses his surroundings.[55]

Unlike Proudhon, Kropotkin did not feel that humans would have to bury themselves in work in order to meet necessity or that sociality is derived from socialist economics; he, as Fourier, saw a liberatory potential in machinery and also a need for greater sensual fulfillment of individuals through communal forms.

> Man is not a being whose exclusive purpose in life is eating, drinking, and providing a shelter for himself. As soon as his material wants are satisfied, other needs, which generally speaking may be described as of an artistic character will thrust themselves forward. These needs are of the greatest variety; they vary with each and every individual; and the more society is civilized, the more will individuality be developed, and the more will desires be varied.[56]

The new technology, once privilege is abolished, could be utilized by the self-organizing people to create a new commune,[57] a higher form of social life for both mind and

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[55]Peter Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread (London: n.p., 1913; reprint ed. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968), p. 160.

[56]Ibid., p. 133.

[57]Medieval free village community or city. See Mutual Aid for further explanation.

body than had ever been attained or even hoped for in the medieval commune that Kropotkin so admired.

Once anarchist thought had reassessed itself in light of these new findings on the origins of social life, it was impossible for it to accept a "law of the jungle" as valid for any stage of human development. Where Proudhon and Bakunin accepted the idea of pre-conscious and pre-social humans, Kropotkin, Elie and Elisee Reclus, and most other late nineteenth century anarchists conceived of humans as basically social animals. They rejected the view that our natural roots were evil. Kropotkin wrote,

> . . . if a scientist maintains that 'the only lesson Nature gives to man is one of evil' then he necessarily has to admit the existence of some other, extra-natural influence which inspires man with conceptions of 'supreme good' and guided human development towards a higher goal. And in this way he nullifies his own attempt at explaining evolution by the action of natural forces only.[58]

The Social Darwinist position, whereby the strong survive and the best command, entails an asocial conception of animal ontology: Civilization requires that humans be socialized by a hierarchically ordered restraining force applying an externally derived measure of good. Since the human beast has to be forced to be free, social life becomes a rule of reasoned abstract and inflexible law,

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[58]Kropotkin, Ethics, p. 13.

in direct opposition to human biological essence. In this paradigm, liberty is created by an external state order and not order by natural liberty.

The authoritarian socialists of Kropotkin's time ignored the social aspects of evolution prior to the rise of socialism (excepting primitive communism for some), for history in their conception was the ascendence from asociality to sociability due to the development of modes of production in society rather than to a social drive in human nature itself. It was thought that once human social nature became tainted by oriental-despotic, feudal, and capitalist forms of production and the social relations born of these productive relations, it would take a resocializing process to make the new man/woman of the socialist future possible. One modern writer explains,

> . . . the implications of mutual aid are also ignored by socialists. . . . In defending their conceptions of the State against the critical attacks of the anarchists, these people declare that authority and power to enforce it are necessary to protect society from the anti-social inclinations of the individual. And they add that 'you must have authority where a division of labour exists, otherwise everyone would do as they liked.' The assumption behind all these arguments is that 'doing what one likes' is of necessity anti-social, and that social behaviour must be imposed on men by an authority outside themselves, to wit, the State. Such a premise makes the erection of a central coercive authority a logical necessity.
>
> But to assume that 'doing what one likes' is necessarily to engage in anti-social behaviour is to ignore the whole evidence on which the conception of mutual aid is based, and to deny its universality in

> human society and throughout the societies of animals. In effect, such an assumption destroys the whole basis of socialism itself.[59]

Positing an inherently anti-social human nature transforms any conception of socialism into a granting of privileges--material rewards--denies the libertarian ("utopian") content of socialism, the freeing of the individual from the external tyrannies that have fragmented and subsequently dominated social life. Building socialism takes on the requirement that social relations must be subordinated to the demands of a rationalized and socialized division of labor. This authoritarian stance became the practical non-utopian image of socialism, especially after the October Revolution in the Soviet Union.

Anarchists replied that the full flowering of the social and creative qualities could not be equated with such projects as the "electrification" of society.[60] Creative life must never be subordinated to the demands of an abstract socialism. The moral that Kropotkin and others had drawn by studying social qualities in the

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[59]Hewetson, "Mutual Aid and Social Evolution," pp. 267-268. The authoritarian socialist view of human nature, as well as the assumptions derived from it, has remained virtually unchanged in the past century.

[60]Lenin's formula for communism was, "Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country." V.I. Lenin, "A Single Economic Plan" (February 1921), Lenin Reader, ed. Stefan T. Possony (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1966), p. 101.

natural world was that once humans were freed from external restraints--both those arising from the indignities of material want and those due to social relationships based on privilege--humans would spontaneously organize themselves.[61] Socialism would generate itself; the leaders and planners would retire, leaving the conduct of people's lives to the people themselves.

> . . . we are not afraid to forego judges and their sentences. We forego sanctions of all kinds, even obligations to morality. We are not afraid to say 'Do what you will; act as you will; because we are persuaded that the great majority of mankind, in proportion to their degree of enlightenment and the completeness with which they free themselves from existing fetters will behave and act always in a direction useful to society just as we are persuaded beforehand that a child will one day walk on its two feet and not on all fours, simply because it is born of parents belonging to the genus Homo.[62]

Kropotkin tried to come to grips with the creative powers lying within our evolutionary legacy and with the

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[61]"Give the people a free hand, and in ten days the food service will be conducted with admirable regularity. Only those who have never seen the people hard at work, only those who have passed their lives buried among documents can doubt it. Speak of the organizing genius of the 'Great Misunderstood,' the people, to those who have seen it in Paris in the days of the barricades, or in London during the great dockers' strike, when half a million of starving folk had to be fed, and they will tell you how superior it is to the official ineptness of Bumbledom." Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread (London, n.p., 1913; reprint ed., New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968), p. 79.

[62]Peter Kropotkin, "Anarchist Morality," Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, ed. Roger N. Baldwin (New YorK: Vanguard Press, 1927; reprint ed. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1970), pp. 102-103.

possibilities of a reasoned development of society, which would allow for the absolute freedom of individuals.[63] Only new social institutions, he concluded, built from the bottom up "by means of the . . . popular creative power and constructive activity based upon modern science and technique"[64] would liberate humanity from the forces of ignorance, want, avarice, greed, and other such divisive traits perpetuated by hierarchical organization.

Drawing from Kropotkin's work, Hewetson writes that although " . . . competition between individual members of society is not a 'law of nature,' it is certainly a law of . . . any class divided society."[65] Therefore, the creation of socialism requires that the entire content of class divided society be abolished. In Kropotkin's words,

> To give full scope to socialism entails rebuilding from top to bottom a society dominated by the narrow individualism of the shopkeeper. It is not . . . just a question of completely reshaping all relationships. . . . In every street, in every hamlet, in every group of men gathered around a factory, an organizational spirit must be awakened in order to rebuild life--in the factory, in the village, in the store, in production and in distribution of supplies. All relations between

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[63]However, he explicitly excluded egotistic individualism: "Each individual understands that he will be really free in proportion only as all the others round him become free." Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, Simian edition, p. 21.

[64]Ibid., p. 2.

[65]Hewetson, "Mutual Aid and Social Evolution," p. 260.

> individuals and great centres of population have to be made all over again, from the very day, from the very moment one alters the existing commercial or administrative organization.[66]

To build a free society, the turn of the century libertarian, as his/her contemporary counterpart, sought more than nationalization of industrial concerns, for socialism would be much more than a simple surfeit of goods or a rationalization of the economy. Similarly, the political structure would require a transformation, for as Gustav Landauer, a contemporary of Kropotkin's, said, "The State is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a model of human behavior; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently."[67] Socialism in content as well as in rhetoric would entail a reintegration of mind and body and a new unity between people to replace the relations of class divided society, which are basically incompatible with humans' social nature. Only a complete and holistic approach to freedom would bring about concrete social change consistent with individual need.

As we have seen, Kropotkin, being in the socialist tradition, believed that the development of material production in society would put an end to the economic

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[66]Kropotkin, The State: Its Historic Role, pp. 54-55.

[67]Gustav Landauer, quoted in Buber, Paths in Utopia, p. 47.

exploitation which has given rise to asocial forms and structures. He viewed socialism as the stage in the evolution of society which would transcend the previously inevitable hierarchical structures generated by material want and class privilege. Furthermore, he saw the technologically advanced countries as on the brink of this monumental transition.

> . . . modern humanity developed a youthful, daring spirit of invention, stimulated by the recent discoveries of science; and the inventions that followed in rapid succession have to such an extent increased the productive capacity of human labour as to make at last possible for modern civilized peoples such a general well-being as could not be dreamt of in antiquity, or in the Middle Ages, or even in the earlier portion of the nineteenth century. For the first time in the history of civilization mankind has reached a point where the means of satisfying its needs are in excess of the needs themselves. To impose, therefore . . . the curse of misery and degradation upon vast divisions of mankind, in order to secure well-being and further mental development for the few, is needed no more: well-being can be secured for all, without placing on anyone the burden of oppression, degrading toil, and humanity can at last rebuild its entire social life on the basis of justice.[68]

The prerogatives and pleasures of power and privilege which were inherent in class divided society now rested more on what Bakunin called the "cult of authority"--a belief in the heroic leader and organizer--than on any basis in necessity.

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[68]Kropotkin, Ethics, p. 2. Material needs should not be confused with desire. Non-socialist thought and even many varieties of socialist thought usually disregard the difference between need and desires. They are equated so as to allow commodities to take the place of a new way of life.

Socialism would arise as the potential for a new social life became more apparent within the technology of capitalism and as the masses acted on their own behalf to actualize this possibility. Rudolf Rocker, the early twentieth century anarchist, wrote that Kropotkin, like Elisee Reclus and several others,

> . . . saw in revolution only a special phase of the evolutionary process, which appears when new social aspirations are so restricted in their natural development by authority that they have to shatter the old shell by violence before they can function as new factors in human life.[69]

To anarchists, the composition of socialist propaganda and the promotion of communal forms (e.g., unions, agricultural communes, direct democracy, etc.) were the necessary evolutionary "steps" prior to the social revolution (as opposed to simply a political revolution). Thus, evolution leads to revolution. As Elisee Reclus stated,

> The word Evolution, synonomous with gradual and continuous development in morals and ideas, is brought forward in certain circles as though it were the antithesis of that fearful word, Revolution, which implies changes more or less sudden in their action, and entailing some sort of catastrophe. And yet is it possible that a transformation can take place in ideas without bringing about some abrupt displacements in the equilibrium of life? Must not revolution necessarily follow evolution, as action follows the desire to act? They are fundamentally one and the same thing, differing only according to the time of

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[69]Rudolf Rocker, Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism (London: Freedom Press, 1973), p. 22.

> their appearance. If, on the one hand, we believe in the normal progress of ideas, and, on the other, expect opposition, then, of necessity, we believe in external shocks which change the form of society.[70]

Thus, the new society would not come into being solely as the result of the "moral progress of ideas," of the material development of society, or even as a socialist led coup de main. Material progress is a prerequisite to socialism but it is not the substance of socialism; restructuring social life demands a new social consciousness. Only a well-rounded social being is capable of creating a realm of freedom; that is, reason or bodily fulfillment by themselves do not suffice to build a social environment. Kropotkin said,

> . . . mental fertility destitute of well-developed sensibility will bring forth such barren fruits as literary and scientific pedants who only hinder the advance of knowledge . . . [while] sensibility unguided by large intelligence will produce such persons as the woman ready to sacrifice everything for some brute of a man, upon whom she pours forth all her love.[71]

The mind could no longer be separated from the passions if humans were to be truly free. With a bodily-based reason, people would no longer need abstractions, the external "vampires of history," and their human perpetuators to rationalize the earthly situation so as

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[70]Elisee Reclus, Evolution and Revolution, The Bellamy Library (London: W. Reeves, n.d.), p. 3.

[71]Kropotkin, "Anarchist Morality," p. 110.

to live "socially" or to live "well." People would be able to go about the business of their own daily existences without having to wrench things from or do violence to the persons of others.

Anarchist thinkers of this time saw the mission of science as aiding in the reconstruction of consciousness along anti-elitist, material lines, beginning with evolutionary theory and its implications.

> You lovers of pure science, if you are imbued with principles of socialism, if you have understood the real meaning of the revolution knocking at the door, do you not see that all science has to be recast in harmony with the new principles: that it is for you to accomplish in this field a scientific revolution far greater than that of the eighteenth century? Do you not understand that history today 'lies agreed upon' about great kings, great statesmen and parliaments--that history itself has to be written from the point of view of the accomplishments of the masses in human evolution?[72] [Italics mine]

This view was in opposition to the Social Darwinists' conception of history in terms of the survival of the fittest, an elitist phenomenon in which social life arises by arresting natural impulses.[73] Furthermore, it went

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[72]Peter Kropotkin, "An Appeal to the Young," trans. H.N. Hyndman (New York: The Resistance Press, 1948), p. 14. See especially Kropotkin's The Great French Revolution, trans. N.F. Dryhurst, Forward by George Woodcock and Ivan Avokumović (London and New York: William Heinemann and G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1909; reprint ed. New York: Schocken Books, 1971) for an example of this type of history.

[73]The liberal social science of Social Darwinism was formulated on a conceptual dilemma. As a status quo conception, it was based on evolution. If the elites in society were the most fit, it would always be so. In that

beyond the authoritarian socialists' evolutionary consciousness, which was based on the history of society's productive development. Herbert Read, a twentieth century anarchist philosopher, stated that authoritarian Marxism and anarchism have differed basically in that

> Marxism [not all variants] is based on economics; anarchism on biology. Marxism still clings to an antiquated Darwinism and sees history and politics as illustrations of a struggle for existence between social classes. Anarchism does not deny the importance of such economic forces, but it insists that there is something still more important, the consciousness of an overriding human solidarity.[74]

Anarchists viewed evolution in terms of social relations which have been stunted by material lack and the parasitic elites it has spawned. A secure material existence for all had to be insured if socialism was to succeed as more than a self-abnegating asceticism or as a limited

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case, evolution was a moot point. If not, the status quo could not be preserved, since evolution means continual change. Several ways were devised to escape this conceptual bind, the successful solution being a reversion to the liberal concept of balance of interests as developed by John Locke and other "free market" economist-philosophers. The law of the jungle was held in check by the balance of enlightened self-interests. Society as a whole developed with a functional elite on top, and evolution became material progress with the surfeit of goods to satiate the animal rapaciousness in humans and to thus hold society together. Standardized elites could thus safely occupy the slots in the top of the corporate state.

[74]Herbert Read, Anarchy and Order, Introduction by Howard Zinn (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), pp. 154-155.

struggle for survival; science would be the means of the transformation from scarcity to freedom in its broadest sense.[75] There is a profound optimism evident in the anarchist social science of this era, as is clear in this statement from Kropotkin's Ethics.

> When we cast a glance upon the immense progress realized by the natural sciences in the course of the nineteenth century, and when we perceive the promises they contain for the future, we cannot but feel deeply impressed by the idea that mankind is entering upon a new era of progress. . . . We must turn back 2000 years, to the glorious times of the philosophical revival in Ancient Greece, in order to find another such period of the awakening of the human intellect. And yet, even this comparison would not be correct, because at that early period of human history, man did not enter into possession of all those wonders of industrial technique which have lately arrayed in our service. The development of this technique at last gives man the opportunity to free himself from slavish toil.[76]

Ironically, the essence of the turn of the century anarchist perspective on social evolution stood in stark contrast to its own professed philosophy of science. While Kropotkin and others believed that nature was diverse and free forming and that socialism must reflect this, they nevertheless tried to fit anarchism into a Newtonian paradigm--a universalistic formula of science. They seem to have believed that the best way to "legitimize"

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[75]See especially Kropotkin's The Conquest of Bread and Fields, Factories and Workshops (London, 1899; reprint ed. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969).

[76]Kropotkin, Ethics, p. 1.

anarchist thought in the developing age of science was to garb it in the language of the "hardest" scientific paradigm, that of physics. Kropotkin, in a typical Newtonian-flavored statement from his Modern Science and Anarchism stated,

> Anarchism is a world-concept based upon a mechanical explanation of all phenomena, embracing the whole of nature--that is, including in it the life of human societies and their economic, political, and moral problems. Its method of investigation is that of the exact natural sciences, and, if it pretends to be scientific, every conclusion it comes to must be verified by the method by which every scientific conclusion must be verified. Its aim is to construct a synthetic philosophy comprehending in one generalization all the phenomena of nature--and therefore also the life of societies.
>
> It is therefore natural that to most of the questions of modern life anarchism should give new answers, and hold with regard to them a position differing from those of all political and to a certain extent socialistic parties which have not yet freed themselves from the metaphysical fictions of old.[77]

Kropotkin saw false social "sciences" existing grounded in "metaphysical" conceptions rather than simply sciences erroneously applied (as Bakunin thought) so that the authoritarian socialist and bourgeois social sciences were based on factors incongruent with the rules of natural order. He posited anarchism as the correct formulation of social science in social matters (although in embryonic form), just as the laws of physics were in physical matters. The difference between an anarchist social

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[77]Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, Simian edition, p. 5.

science and natural science was not so much one of kind for Kropotkin (as Bakunin insisted, for he feared humans could be treated as objects by science), but simply one of content and quantity of accurate formulations.

> . . . the elaboration of a complete mechanical world conception has hardly been begun in its sociological part--in that part, that is, which deals with the life and evolution of societies.[78]

Thus, anarchist social science was at best a nascent science of the social, for it lacked a universalistic social formula to reconstitute life according to the "mechanical world conception" of the "evolution of societies." Anarchism had to conform to the "mechanical world conception" to be "practical," that is, scientific--at least on the philosophic level. Although in reality anarchism's conception of social life conflicted with this universalist paradigm, anarchists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who desired a scientific basis for anarchism had to accept it, as it was the sole acceptable definition of science at this time. Thus, Kropotkin stated that the "miraculous" success of the inductive scientific method was entirely compatible with anarchism.

> The inductive method has proved its merits so well, that the nineteenth century, which has applied it, has caused science to advance more in a hundred

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[78]Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, Simian edition, p. 6.

> years than it had advanced during the two thousand years that went before. And when in the second half of the century this method began to be applied to the investigation of human society, no point was ever reached where it was found necessary to abandon it and again adopt medieval scholasticism. Besides, when philistine naturalists, seemingly basing their arguments on "Darwinism," began to teach, "Crush whoever is weaker than yourself, such is the law of nature," it was easy for us to prove first, that was not Darwin's conclusion, and by the same scientific method to show that these scientists were on the wrong path; that no such law exists; that the life of animals teaches us something entirely different, and that their conclusions were absolutely unscientific. They were just as unscientific as for instance the assertion that the inequality of wealth is a law of nature, or that capitalism is the most advantageous form of social life calculated to promote progress. Precisely this natural scientific method applied to economic facts, enables us to prove that the so-called "laws" of middle-class sociology, including also their political economy, are not laws at all, but simply guesses, or mere assertions which have never been verified at all.[79]

Since the Newtonian conception of science was successful in certain areas of natural explanation, it was felt that it must be applicable in the same sense to the social aspects of life.

Science in the Newtonian model demanded the rejection of the dialectical method; however, a dialectical conception of reality--the dynamic of sociality and asociality, of freedom and slavery--never was forsaken by anarchism. Yet the turn of the century anarchist philosophy of

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[79]Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, Simian edition, pp. 7-8.

science defends the inductive method and condemns the dialectic method as inconsistent with reason and science.

> We have heard much of late about 'the dialectic method' which was recommended for formulating the socialist idea. Such a method we do not recognize, neither would the modern natural sciences have anything to do with it. 'The dialectic method' reminds the modern naturalist of something long since passed--of something out lived and now happily forgotten by science. The discoveries of the nineteenth century . . . were made not by the dialectic method, but by the natural scientific method, the method of induction and deduction. And since man is part of nature, and since the life of his 'spirit,' personal as well as social, is just as much a phenomenon of nature as is the growth of a flower or the evolution of social life amongst the ants and the bees, there is no cause for suddenly changing our method of investigation when we pass from the flower to man, or from a settlement of beavers to a human town.[80]

The inductive method was supposedly valid in application to all aspects of scientific inquiry, including social science. Thus, the mechanical law of the evolution of society was identical in nature to the law that explicated the fall of a rock. The philosophic dilemma in which anarchism placed itself by accepting this paradigm is seen by its trying to gauge its own relevance by criteria hostile to its assumptions. The practicality of anarchism was tied to a science that rejected anarchism's observations on social life and did not fully accept biological evolutionary theory (despite Social Darwinism)

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[80]Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, Simian edition, p. 7.

as compatible with the mechanical and immutable laws of matter. Kropotkin wrote,

> Whether or not anarchism is right in its conclusions will be shown by a scientific criticism of its bases and by the practical life of the future.[81]

However, the answer to this question was negatively predetermined by anarchism's embracing of a paradigm contradictory to itself. How could "practical life," the meeting of necessity, be regulated by one set social law? Furthermore, if the "scientific" criticism of anarchism proved the latter to be inconsistent with "scientific law," must anarchists abandon their struggle for a harmonious and equitable social life? Such critical questions were never raised by Kropotkin and his contemporaries, who, for all their methodical research and humanistic efforts, were consistently unable to critically evaluate the idea of science.

Nevertheless, in a vein similar to Bakunin, Kropotkin regarded the laws of science as conditional, for they dealt on an abstract level with concrete reality. The law of gravity did not make a rock fall; so too, the law of anarchy does not make people social. These laws were simply explanatory devices. In Kropotkin's view, the social scientific opponents of anarchism had too

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[81]Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, Simian edition, p. 48.

absolute a conception of scientific law.

> The scientific method (the inductive method of natural science) being utterly unknown to them, they fail to give themselves any definite account of what constitutes 'a law of nature,' although they delight in using the term. They do not know--or if they know they continually forget--that every law of nature has a conditional character. In fact every natural law always means this: 'If certain conditions in nature are at work, certain things will happen.'[82]

Therefore, science is abstracted from observable experience. Yet Kropotkin failed to realize that the model of Newtonian physics generated its own mythic reality of science--that is, scientific law came to circumscribe observation.

The anarchist social science of Kropotkin's time tried to employ the inductive scientific method, developed and accepted by bourgeois society, to study human evolution and to explain the "scientific" basis of anarchy, just as the telescope was used to study planetary movement. However, the science of "intellectual optics," as Elie Reclus called it, did not in reality fatally limit anarchist thought, for few anarchists were able to see and study society in this way, their claims to the contrary notwithstanding. Furthermore, some anarchist thinkers, preferring a dialectical, mystical, or a pure syndicalist approach to reality, took issue with scientific anarchism, so that a lively controversy developed within the

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[82]Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, Simian edition, p. 34.

movement. For example, the prominent Italian anarchist, Errico Malatesta, questioned the violence his fellow anarchists were doing to the cause by accepting the mechanistic mode of science they expounded in their intellectualizations of anarchism. He felt that this orientation largely overlooked the voluntary, spontaneous and moral quality of anarchism--what he believed was best in human life and anarchist thought. Evaluating Kropotkin's life and work shortly after the latter's death, Malatesta wrote:

> Kropotkin adhered to the materialist philosophy that prevailed among scientists in the second half of the nineteenth century . . . ; and consequently his concept of the Universe was vigourously mechanistic.
>
> According to his sytem, Will (a creative power whose source and nature we cannot comprehend, just as, likewise, we do not understand the nature and source of 'matter' or any of the other 'first principles') . . . which contributes much or little in determining the conduct of individuals and of society, does not exist and is a mere illusion. All that has been, that is and will be, from the path of the stars to the birth and decline of a civilization, from the perfume of a rose to the smile on a mother's lips, from an earthquake to the thoughts of a Newton, from a tyrant's cruelty to a saint's goodness, everything had to, must and will occur as a result of an inevitable sequence of causes and effects of mechanical origin, which leaves no possibility of variety. The illusion of Will is itself a mechanical fact.
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> Naturally if Will has no power, if everything is necessary and cannot be other wise, then ideas of freedom, justice and responsibility have no meaning, and have no bearing on reality.
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> Thus logically all we can do is to contemplate what is happening in the world with indifference, pleasure, or pain . . . without hope and without the possibility of changing anything. . . .
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> So Kropotkin, who was very critical of the fatalism of Marxists, was himself the victim of mechanistic fatalism which is far more inhibiting. But

> philosophy could not kill the powerful Will that was in Kropotkin. He was too strongly convinced of the truth of his system to abandon it or stand by passively while others cast doubt on it; he was too passionate and too desirous of liberty and justice to be halted by the difficulty of a logical contradiction, and give up the struggle. He got round the dilemma by introducing anarchism into his system and making it into scientific truth.[83]

Malatesta's belief was that anarchism was a great deal more than the application of the inductive method to social life. He denied the possibility of there being a social scientific anarchist perspective. Yet it seems that Malatesta overstated his case; a social science of anarchism was neither impossible, indifferent, nor fatalistic. Rather, it was the attempt to apply a mechanistic philosophy of science (which had been developed to meet the needs of an expanding and centralizing industrial capitalist structure) to anarchism that harmed the concept of an anarchist social science. If "anarchism originated . . . from the practical demands of life,"[84] as Kropotkin himself stated, then a social science of anarchism could be better derived from the structure of ethnological, biological and ecological conceptions of social science than from the immutable laws of physics. Bakunin wisely questioned the application of a universal

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[83]Errico Malatesta, "Pietro Kropotkin--Ricordi e Criteche di un Vecchio Amico," Appendix IV, Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas, ed. Vernon Richards (London: Freedom Press, 1965), pp. 262-263.

[84]Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, Simian edition, p. 9.

social physics to life, but had missed the essence of a social science in his belief in its Newtonian character. Kropotkin and others went beyond the Newtonian content of science and into the realm of social science rooted in biology, but they were ultimately limited by a conceptualization of science that negated much of their thought, even if they largely ignored the contradictions. If anarchist social thought was to stand on its own, it had to break away from a paradigm with a monolithic orienation and construct a uniquely anarchist framework of understanding. In the early and middle decades of this century, the foundation was laid for contemporary anarchist social science, whose perspective is better able to explicate the possibilities of a society embodying a unity of life in diversity and social harmony, as well as to serve as a critique of the existing order. Present anarchist thought has abandonned the Newtonian paradigm as a model for social science as hampering, harmful, and irrelevant to the anarchist explanation of human existence.

If many of the anarchists of Kropotkin's time were guilty of any major fault in regard to science, it was placing excessive faith in the ability of science to liberate humanity from injustice, a result of the Enlightenment tradition, as well as their partial acceptance of the Newtonian paradigm. They could not see that science was just as much a prisoner of the prejudices of the

society in which it developed; rather than freeing humans to create a new social existence consistent with ultimate scientific reality, science has become more integrated with the existing social structures, even further narrowing areas of human autonomy and spontaneity. The contemporary anarchist Murray Bookchin states,

> In our time, we have seen the assimilation of these once liberatory sciences by the established social order. Indeed, we have begun to regard science itself as an instrument of control over the thought processes and physical being of man. This distrust of science and of the scientific method is not without justification. . . . What is perhaps equally important, modern science has lost its critical edge. Largely functional or instrumental in intent, the branches of science that once tore at the chains of man are now used to perpetuate and gild them.[85]

When the early anarchists accepted social science as a social physics, they little realized that the ends of a social science were inseparable from its methods. That an anarchist social science could ground itself only in anarchism's own values became increasingly clear as the West moved into a post-industrial age, heightening the contradictions inherent in hierarchical modes of social organization. The development of anarchist social science in recent years will be the subject of Chapter IV.

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[85]Murray Bookchin, Post-Scarcity Anarchism, pp. 57-58.

C H A P T E R I V

CONTEMPORARY ANARCHIST SOCIAL SCIENCE

The Collapse of Critical Bourgeois Social Science

It has been shown in this work that both anarchism and the assumptions of the social science it adopted had their groundings in the Enlightenment tradition of critical reconstructive science. Natural science in the Enlightenment tradition led almost teleologically to the creation of a social science, for science in the late eighteenth century was regarded as the real force capable of rectifying social abuses and ushering in an "Age of Reason." Social science was viewed by Comte, the bourgeois political economists, and the early socialists as the outgrowth and adjunct of the practical application of the critical redemptive message inherent in the sciences. It must thus be remembered, in face of our contemporary notions, that the reconstructive and critical ideals of social science did not arise *in vacuo*. Max Horkheimer, a libertarian socialist of the Frankfort School, wrote:

> The task of describing facts without respect for non-scientific consideration and of establishing the

> patterns of relations between them was originally formulated as a partial goal of bourgeois emancipation in its critical struggle against Scholastic restrictions upon research. But by the second half of the nineteenth century this definition had already lost its progressive character and showed itself to be, on the contrary, a limiting of scientific activity to the description, classification, and generalization of phenomena, with no care to distinguish the unimportant from the essential. In the measure that concern for a better society, which still dominated the Enlightenment, gave way to the attempt to prove that present-day society should be permanent, a deadening and disorganizing factor entered science.[1]

As the industrial nation-state and its modes of social and productive organization were widely established in the nineteenth century, science lost its role as a force external to and often critical of the structures and norms of society. It was metamorphosed into "modern science," an integral part of the rationalized economic system characteristic of modern society. This change, brought about by industrialization and the developing process of nation-building (expansion of the state and statist organizational patterns both within and outside the individual state), eventually circumscribed scientific thought so that if functioned largely within the existing social structures. Paul Goodman, a modern anarchist, described the result of this as being that

> . . . the system of knowledge has become interlocked with the other great institutions of society and the dominant style takes over. But this

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[1]Max Horkheimer, Critical Theory, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell et al. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. 5.

> style was not devised for open dialogue with surprise; it was devised for cash accounting, tax collection, military discipline, logistics, and mass manufacture. Yet bureaucratic methods must somehow be appropriate to science too. . . . To be servicable, excellent scientists become administrators. Grant-getters who are clever about the forms become scientists. Corporations become impresarios for scientists.[2]

Thus, natural science in its modern role has accepted uncritically the status quo. The major function of science in the modern world is to produce innovations according to the dictates of a capitalist (or in the case of the U.S.S.R., of a state socialist) economic system.

Simultaneous with the collapse of science qua social critic was the conventionalization of the social sciences, which had originated as a radical critique of the socio-economic systems of industrialism. The twentieth century's "practicalization"--governmental and institutional adoption of the methods, perspective, and most significantly, the myth of social science in order to further legitimize the economic and political order--has served to advance the decline of its role as a critical force. Thus, we see the development of bourgeois social science from a revolutionary déclassé stance in early political economy, to an intermediate stage characterized by stasis oriented theories built on

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[2]Paul Goodman, Like A Conquered Province (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 306.

evolutionary change--expounded by Malthus, Manchesterite economists, William Graham Sumner, Huxley, and others--and finally, to the structural-functionalist schools of thought of recent years, conceptually resting on a mechanistic equilibrium, with stasis as their goal. Theories of qualitative change no longer have a place when the present order is defined as essentially consistent with scientific rationality: It is simply unnecessary for the liberal social scientist to formulate a broad critique of existing social relations and structures of society. A "practical" applied science (tied to the productive system)--natural or social--is cultivated by the economic and political institutions which it "sanctifies." Social science in its modern setting has to be "value free" ("neutral")--primarily a technical aid, renouncing what "ought to be" and operating cautiously in limited areas of "what is" so as to conquer the remaining social and environmental obstacles to the good life.[3] Partial status-quo conceptions of social science, by virtue of their elements of risk, threatened the new ideal of stasis. The pure concepts of the free market of political economists, and

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[3]"Disregarding the obligation to help people in the shaping of their most important concerns, the accumulation of knowledge has degenerated into an end in itself, a fetish." The Frankfort Institute for Social Research, Aspects of Sociology, Preface by Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), p. 8. It is easy to see how this suits the needs of a system concerned with quantitative measures of progress and with preventing radical change.

the Social Darwinists' concept of "positive checks" and the battle for survival were disruptive to a rationalized system of social relationships. These concepts gradually lost their prominence as the new social science adopted the perspective that what is is real in the sense of philosophical good.

The collapse of social science as a radically reconstructive phenomenon in industrial society was increasingly evident as it became more established as the legitimate explication of scientific-rational consciousness in modern life. Social science in its new framework began to seek theory construction and refinement of methodology. However, as Paul Goodman stated, means become ends in this paradigm, to the detriment of the society as a whole.

> . . . social scientists devote inordinate attention to Methodology, as if sharpening their tools for some use that is not yet. Needless to say, this theoretical methodology is irrelevant to our ongoing society whose needs, rather, are glaring and hardly require so much subtle documentation and analysis before getting to work. And as always, the avoidance is more influential than the attention. Also, the social scientists themselves become safe spectators.[4]

Mainstream (liberal) social science has involved itself in the "practical" concerns of maintaining the power structure, which in turn supports its scientific claims

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[4]Paul Goodman, The Community of Scholars (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), p. 251.

and research. Thus, liberal social science has an important latent function in maintaining the prevailing ideology of order. Its proclaimed purpose, the discovery of the social laws that determine behavior, routinizes science so that prediction (of social trends, election results, economic conditions, etc.) becomes the short-run goal. At the same time, scientific activity is removed from everyday life so that it becomes an entirely specialized function--one that is deemed necessary for evaluating and "guiding" social planning. The resulting form of science is a rationalized elitist one; this is well suited to the needs of the powerful segments of modern society.

The dominant ideal of science as an unchanging standard beyond the realm of ordinary activity is expressed in the following statement by a "mainstream" social science methodologist, Alan Isaak.

> While science begins with common sense (everyone who looks sees the same chairs or analyzes the same attitude questionnaires), scientific knowledge is not the same as commonsensical knowledge. It is at this point that the systematic nature of science becomes relevant. For the scientist takes his observations and attempts to classify and analyze them. His first objective is to formulate useful empirical concepts that organize the phenomena which interest him. Then, starting with the assumption of determinism, he attempts to find relationships between these concepts. If successful, he discovers a scientific <u>law</u> or generalization. Further systematization of empirical knowledge is achieved by the construction of <u>theories</u> which are collections of logically related generalizations. Finally, the scientist uses his

> laws and theories to explain events and situations which have occurred or exist and to predict future happenings. It can, thus, be said that the scientist's attempts to systematize are all leading up to this ultimate objective, to explain and predict--to show why things were, are, or will be.[5]

It is clear that Newtonianism, which was temporarily eclipsed by evolutionary thought, has reasserted its hegemony in social science's interpretations of modern science and in social science itself. Basic social relations are no longer questioned in the theories of the new "social physics"; rather, they are simply assumed to be immutable. A rigid predictivist science has been constructed on the ontology of an essentially static social order which nevertheless prides itself on its "progress"--that is, industrial productivity. As the economic and state structures "rationalized" modern life and thought, social science was bound to align itself with social reality. Science, regarded in our age as an unqualified blessing, has therefore been interpreted in the society's own terms in order to respond to the needs of the system, which has turned for philosophical support and justification to social science.[6]

Supported by the economic and governmental structures of modern societies, "Science acquires the aura that the

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[5]Alan Isaak, Scope and Methods of Political Science (Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1969), p. 28.

[6]This process, of course, is a dynamic one and is not deliberate in the conspiratorial sense.

archaic world once reserved for magic," so that the handling of social problems "tends to be biased toward technical expertise."[7] "Experts" in the modern world, who are seen to possess the most vital knowledge of social processes, exercise a formidable power[8] in the regulation of our rationalized social system, in a manner somewhat analogous to that of the shaman of old who used secret knowledge to obtain the meagre surplus and the obedience of the many (see pp. 125-126 above). However, science today is used not so much as a cudgel, but rather as a buttress of the norms of both post-industrial welfare and authoritarian socialist regimes. Science, which in this age is so necessary a force, has been enshrined in one particular form in the social systems that already exist.

Science, as Noam Chomsky has stated, has always existed as a natural part of society, but in a formally hierarchical society, science facilitates subservience and dependence on those in power. As William O. Reichert observes, anarchists hold that "all social science must remain a hopeless confusion so long as men persist in accommodating social science to the facts of power."[9]

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[7]Bookchin, The Limits of the City, p. 94.

[8]The exercise of such power may be open, covert, and/or even unconscious.

[9]William O. Reichert, "Anarchism, Freedom and Power," Ethics 79 (January 1969): 142.

Modern anarchist scholarship stresses the view that science arose in much the same fashion as sociality, ethics, morality, and so forth, and that as a natural factor in human life, it is thus an essential ingredient of consciousness. Science is intimately bound with the basic fabric of human life;[10] when primitive people, for example, discovered which plan to use for a particular purpose--which fibers make the best nets, and such--they were engaged in a process which was science in its earliest stage. Thus, humans do not have to "transcend themselves" to engage in scientific thinking. Chomsky writes:

> We might say . . . that our mental constitution permits us to arrive at knowledge of the world insofar as innate capacity to create theories happens to match some aspect of the structure of the world. By exploring various faculties of the mind, we might in principle come to understand what theories are more readily accessible to us than others, or what potential theories are accessible to us at all, what forms of scientific knowledge can be attained if the world is kind enough to have the required properties. Where it is not, we may be able to develop a kind of 'intellectual technology'--say a technique of prediction that will, for some reason, work within limits but not to attain what might properly be called scientific understanding or commonsense knowledge. Another organism, following different principles, might develop other sciences, or lack some of ours.[11]

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[10]See Chapter III above; Hewetson, "Mutual Aid and Social Evolution"; Kropotkin, Ethics, pp. 50-61; and Comfort, The Nature of Human Nature (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

[11]Noam Chomsky, Problems of Knowledge and Freedom (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971), p. 21.

For "primitive" humanity, science was inherent in life, but a sense of mystery and fear surrounded natural processes. The first crafts and sciences were tied to mystery and magic. Early humanity, part of nature, knew--perhaps instinctively--that the balance of the natural world could not be disrupted without a harmful effect upon itself. The early organic commune, structured along lines of sexual division of labor, considered the environment to be part of a living order--bird tribes, ape clans, sentient trees, sacred rocks, etc. Humans were only one part of the vast network of interaction among the living and the earth. However, in the process of social evolution, the environment has been so altered by human action that much of the damage that has been done is irreparable. In the West, "modern" times began when Boniface chopped down the sacred trees of the Teutons, thereby removing spiritual barriers to altering nature and thus making agricultural life a possibility throughout all of Europe. The impact of this change over time has been cataclysmic. Murray Bookchin explains:

> The sun, the wind and the earth are experimental realities to which men have responded consciously and reverently from time immemorial. Out of these primal elements man developed his sense of dependence on--and respect for--the natural environment, a dependence that kept his destructive activities in check. The Industrial Revolution and the urbanized world that followed obscured nature's role in human experience--hiding the sun with a pall of smoke, blocking the winds with massive buildings, desecrating the earth with sprawling cities. Man's dependence on

> the natural world became invisible: it became theoretical and intellectual in character, the subject matter of text books, monographs and lectures. True, this theoretical dependence supplied us with insights (partial ones at best) into the natural world, but its onesidedness robbed us of all sensuous dependence on and all visible contact and unity with nature. In losing these, we lost a part of ourselves as feeling beings. We became alienated from nature. Our technology and environment became totally inanimate, totally synthetic--a purely inorganic physical milieu that promoted the deanimization of man and his thought.[12]

One result of the estrangement from nature, the latter being a corollary of the ever more successful drive to dominate the environment to fulfill insatiable "needs," was the mind's ascendence over the body. Consequently, the way was open to the eventual development of the mechanistic form of science with which we are familiar. Where the primitive stood in awe of the environment as part of it, modern humans stand in contempt of it, if not always in theory, certainly in fact; we direct huge amounts of energy toward remaking the environment into a more gratifying commodity. As we shall see later in this chapter, this phenomenon has become a critical problem for our time.

The routinization of natural science also affected socialism, for any shift in one perspective of scientific thought is bound to have repercussions on others.

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[12]Bookchin, Post-Scarcity Anarchism, p. 129.

Historically, socialists usually assumed science and technology to be rational and independent elements pushing toward good "in the womb of" the irrational existing order. There was a demand by opponents of capitalist society to create scientific socialism in this sense. Most twentieth century socialists, however (especially authoritarian socialists), came to share the perspective of bourgeois social scientists--that liberty, equality and fraternity were no longer central to a political or social solution, but were instead solely technical and/or administrative problems--although their rhetoric was strongly anti-capitalist and sometimes even "utopian." The distinctions between "pure" science and technology were increasingly blurred as industrial society developed, a phenomenon which greatly affected social and political thought in this century.

The collapse of socialism as a movement allied with anarchism occurred progressively in the twentieth century. The break with the socialist movement was complete. German Social Democrats voted for war credits. Other socialists (and even certain anarchists) supported the cause of the Entente. The proletariat of France--the repository of libertarian socialist hopes in the nineteenth century--slaughtered and were slaughtered by the German proletariat. A social democratic government in Germany after World War I crushed the workers' council

(räte) movement and its revolution. Anarchists were suppressed and deported en masse in the United States Government's attempt to destroy the movement in this country. The Russian Revolution soured for the anarchists who had taken part in it and for the movement as a whole. The authoritarian socialists, under the leadership of Lenin and acting in the name of scientific socialism, proceeded to slay the popular revolution and to destroy ruthlessly the anarchist and other leftist movements so as to permit a rational socialist nation-building process. Anarchists claimed, though some after the fact, that all of this was the inevitable result of the triumph of authoritarian socialism, as they had predicted for years that socialists who sought power or who worked with it would create only a new barbarism (see Chapter II above). The socialist movements were rife with the toxins of the "successful" authoritarian socialist victory--the proletarian revolution and workers' state with vanguards, dictatorship of the proletariat, commissars, Chekas, democratic centralism, purges, centralized production, prisons, forced-labor camps, etc. Anarchism was branded as quaintly impractical in this new age of "scientific socialism" and of "socialist realism"; if the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had been the era of socialism inclined at least partially toward anarchism and militant syndicalism, the twentieth century

was that of practical technical Leninism and/or social democracy. Nevertheless, the anarchist movement survived, so that when the Revolution broke out in Spain, the movement appeared to be headed for a resurgence as a "third way" which opposed authoritarianism in all forms--both of the left and of the right.[13] However, with the outcome of the war in Spain, and in the aftermath of the Second World War, anarchism as a movement barely survived. Thus, it was easy enough for post-war scholars in most nation-states to ignore anarchism as an alternative or even as a legitimate conceptual concern. It was categorized under the label of history's "lost causes"; its value, if any, was chiefly as an historian's curiosity, although anarchists themselves (unlike Diggers, Luddites, and other "losers") were still very much in evidence, with many--still perceived by the authorities in both the West and the Communist countries as real threats to their respective power structures--gracing numerous states' corrective institutions.

It must be kept in mind that contemporary anarchism and anarchist thought developed from the paradoxes,

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[13]Three fascinating accounts detailing the growth and activities of the Spanish anarchist movement in the thirties are Vernon Richards' Lessons of the Spanish Revolution (London: Freedom Press, 1972); Sam Dolgoff's The Anarchist Collectives: Workers' Self-Management in the Spanish Revolution, 1936-1939 (New York: Free Life Editions, 1974); and Murray Bookchin's The Spanish Anarchists, vol. 1 (New York: Harper and Row, forthcoming).

failings, and restraints that had bound the anarchist movement in the past. Modern anarchist thought is a continuation and yet a greater development of the older body of anarchist thought and of anarchist history. However, when it is found to exist in this "realist" era of the post-industrial nation state, it is considered by most non-anarchists throughout the world to be an anachronism, a remnant of the romantic aspirations of a bygone era. Bookchin puts it this way:

> Until recently, attempts to resolve the contradictions created by urbanization, centralization, bureaucratic growth and statification were viewed as a vain counterdrift to 'progress'--a counterdrift that could be dismissed as chimerical and reactionary. The anarchist was regarded as a forlorn visionary, a social outcast, filled with nostalgia for the peasant village or the medieval commune. His yearnings for a decentralized society and for a humanistic community at one with nature and the needs of the individual--the spontaneous individual, unfettered by authority--were viewed as the reactions of a romantic, of a declassed craftsman or an intellectual 'misfit.' His protest against centralization and statification seemed all the less persuasive because it was supported primarily by ethical considerations--by utopian, ostensibly 'unrealistic' notions of what man could be, not by what he was. In response to this protest, opponents of anarchist thought--liberals, rightists and authoritarian 'leftists'--argued that they were the voices of historic reality, that their statist and centralist notions were rooted in the objective, practical world.[14]

In short, anarchism has been generally regarded as

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[14]Bookchin, Post-Scarcity Anarchism, pp. 68-69. It is Bookchin's opinion that attitudes toward anarchism have changed somewhat since the late 1960's.

unrealistic, at best as a vision of befuddled but kind-hearted moralists. This impression is quite erroneous, for it fails to take into account the significant historical examples of anarchism in practice and the social scientific perspective it has generated for more than a century. Whether or not the scholar is sympathetic to anarchist ideals, he/she has at least to recognize anarchism as a serious and developed world view. The final section of this paper will further examine modern anarchism's critique of contemporary society in terms of its social science.

Modern Social Science and the Anarchist Critique of It

What has united authoritarian socialist social science and liberal social science is their scientific methods' orientation to being rather than becoming, and their view of society as a mechanism running in an unvarying fashion.[15] Socially created facts have been transformed into physical and organic laws of nature. For example, Goodman pointed out that

> . . . in the official bulletin of the Office of Civil Defense, . . . it says, 'Fallout is merely a physical

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[15]Horkheimer, Critical Theory, p. 9.

> fact of this nuclear age. It can be faced like any other fact.' Here we have the full-blown hallucination--dropping the bombs is thought of as a physical fact rather than a social fact. And so this outrageous and moronic proposition is swallowed like everything else.[16]

The contemporary modus operandi becomes an unquestionable physical fact in the context of an order constantly regenerating itself. In established social science (specifically, in the West),

> . . . there is a political pathology in the essence of contemporary social theory that makes revolutionary alternatives inconceivable to social scientists. . . . Contemporary social theory consists in analyzing the arrangement and possible rearrangement of units that are defined as entirely socialized to the system of society, or as deviant. The theory omits animal nature, which cannot be entirely socialized; it omits history which tells us that men have been very different from those they are dealing with; it omits political philosophy, which tells us what men ought to be if life is to be worth living; it omits poetic literature, which imagines other ways of being men. But if we omit these approaches and deal only with 'men as they are,' we are soon left with the world of the front page and of TV, as if this were the real world. In that world, there is no other power than the established power of force, publicity, status, vested holding, protocol, and the market.[17]

The social structure must remain unchanged in essence if the existing complex industrial system is to survive, and social science has committed itself to preserving that structure. Goodman further criticized this accomodation

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[16]Paul Goodman, Drawing the Line (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), pp. 82-83.

[17]Ibid., pp. 103-104.

because of the extremely selective perception it has come to entail.

> Unlike the majority of their predecessors for a century and a half, most of our contemporary social scientists are not interested in fundamental social change. To them, we have apparently reached the summit of institutional progress, and it only remains for the sociologists and applied anthropologists to mop up the corners and iron out the kinks. Social scientists are not attracted to the conflict core of Freud's theory of human nature; a more optimistic theory, like Reich's, is paid no attention at all. But they have hit on the theory . . . that you can adapt people to anything if you use the right techniques.[18]

That humans are basically non-social--a legacy of the Malthusianism and Social Darwinism of the past--is assumed by both authoritarian socialist social science and liberal social science. Humans must be "socialized" so as to fit into society and must be kept social by the threat of sanctions. Order and productive activity depend not on the development of the animal roots in human life but upon their repression by the social roles that modern society has formulated to fulfill the demands of extremely rationalized structures. "A-social" or "anomic" humans must be <u>organized</u> in such a way as to make the rational division of labor possible and create a well-functioning social and economic machine. The concept of role, then, becomes important as an analytical device for constructing social classifications. Everyone in the functional society

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[18]Paul Goodman, <u>Growing Up Absurd</u> (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), p. 10.

has a rationalized set of roles. Juxtaposing the imposed concept of role with the idea of identity, Goodman said,

> We must contrast the concept Role, meeting expectations by playing it cool and knowing the technique for a token performance, with the concept of Identity. . . . One discovers, fights for, appoints oneself to one's Identity. Identity is defined by its task, mission, product; role depends on the interpersonal expectations of the others.[19]

The created "fact" of asociality that both bourgeois and authoritarian socialist social sciences accept as objectively true requires that humans be organized to meet their social responsibilities in the various strata of the industrial order. In their visions of social science, the individual aspires to fit some ideal role--be it the rational enlightened citizen of the welfare state or the "Communist Man" of the future. Both liberal and authoritarian socialist social science defend social relations and conditions as they basically are as physical (natural) facts, for what exists is interpreted within their paradigms as consistent with the laws of the social scientific universe. Phenomena and the individual are classified according to roles that already exist in society so that humans are either players of roles or deviants from them.

The language of conformity-nonconformity is evident in nascent form in Hobbes' Newtonian view of human

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[19]Goodman, Growing Up Absurd, p. 91.

relationships. The language of social science, used by both applied liberal and authoritarian socialist social sciences, is derived not from a communion with the laws of nature, but from a law of order common to both capitalist and socialist forms of industrial state structure. In liberal and authoritarian socialist social science, because power is viewed as the necessary physical force behind the mechanism of social life, synthetic facts such as centralized domination and hierarchical control have been accepted as real physical needs for the society. The consequences, as Goodman saw, are disastrous in terms of satisfactory social living.

> There is a certain amount of normal function surviving or reviving--bread is baked, arts and sciences are pursued by a few, etc.; mostly we see the abortions of lively social functioning saddled, exploited, prevented, perverted, drained dry, paternalized by an imposed system of power and management that preempts the means and makes decisions ab extra. And the damnable thing is that, of course, everybody believes that except in this pattern nothing could be accomplished: if there were no marriage license and no tax, none could properly mate and no children be born and raised; if there were no tolls there would be bridges; if there were no university charters, there would be no higher learning; if there were no usuary and no Iron Law of Wages, there would be no capital; if there were no markup of drug prices, there would be no scientific research. Once society has this style of thought, that every activity requires licensing, underwriting, deciding by abstract power, it becomes inevitably desirable for an ambitious man to seek power and for a vigorous nation to try to be a Great Power. The more some have the power drive, the more it seems to be necessary to the others to compete, or submit, just in order to survive. (And importantly they are right.) Many are ruthless and most live in fear.[20]

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[20]Paul Goodman, "Getting Into Power," appendix 1, People or Personnel (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), pp. 183-184.

Society has come to center around the forceful cement of power relationships, with all important decisions emanating from authoritative centers of decision-making.

Many influential contemporary thinkers feel that the problems of industrial society can be ironed out by greater authoritative centralization and imposed socialization. These advocates of hierarchical modes of organization and thought conceive of the relations between humans in society as unchanging, as pre-determined by universal law. If social problems exist, remedies are to be found in a greater alignment of society to the rationalized laws of social physics. As the relationships in society do not change in content, humans have to conform to existing roles in order for society to function properly. Anti-social conduct is viewed as the natural and inevitable result of unrestrained liberty, for when humans are left without external controls, they will clash like Hobbes' asocial atoms of humanity, or become "capitalist cutthroats," as Engels held, in the context of "anarchy in social production."[21] Furthermore, modern society's obsession with "role" and "practicality" demands that activities be organized; more than small

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[21]Freidrich Engels, Socialism: From Utopia to Science, trans. Edward Aveling (Brooklyn, N.Y.: New York Labor News, 1968), p. 64.

amounts of unorganized leisure, nothing prescribed to do, tend to invite anomic boredom, disinterest, apathy toward the political and economic institutions of society, and finally, criminality, sabotage, or rebellion.

Chomsky is one modern anarchist especially concerned with leisure in modern society. Writing in response to the common social scientific definition of leisure as the condition of having nothing to do, and as a dysfunctional element in large amounts, he has noted:

> Evidently, a distinction must be made between having nothing to do and being able to do as one pleases. Both states presuppose lack of compulsion, but being able to do as one pleases requires the availability of opportunities as well. Under Skinnerian assumptions [Skinner is chosen here as a representative of a school of thought rather than as a thinker who is uniquely significant], it is difficult to distinguish properly between having nothing to do and being able to do as one pleases, since there is no reason to expect anyone to take the opportunity to work without deprivation and reinforcement. Thus, it is not surprising that Skinner slips easily from the definition of 'leisure' as the state in which one appears to be able to do as one pleases, to the assertion that leisure (that is, having nothing to do) is a dangerous condition. . . .
>
> Being able to do as one pleases is a natural goal of the libertarian, but having nothing to do is not. While it may be correct to say that the human species is badly prepared for having nothing to do, it is quite a different matter to say that it is badly prepared for the freedom to do as one pleases.[22]

Release from the regimentation of work would be disruptive and dysfunctional to the fabric of the society which

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[22]Noam Chomsky, For Reasons of State (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973), p. 346.

channels people into occupations to fill the roles demanded by its complex social reality, created by the industrial system. There is much talk of greater leisure in addition to more and "better" commodities--leisure being free time from the more strictly prescribed roles--in both welfare state and authoritarian socialist systems, but the question of work itself remains unasked. Much of the labor that is done in modern society continues to be done not because it is essential to human survival or well-being, but because it would be "economically unfeasible" and politically dangerous to automate completely, abolish. or make it meaningful; the staus quo maintains itself by an institutional momentum of meaningless activity which keeps people busy reacting to acceptable realities so that collective action to create new realities is precluded.

Goodman pointed out that we have come to fear our technology's ability to put people out of work, thereby dooming them to a "non-productive" life of trivial leisure activity.[23] Contemporary anarchism poses the question whether the solution to "the problem of leisure," as it is called, indeed lies in terms of "labor" and "leisure" time; the anarchist's statement of the problem is

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[23]Goodman, People or Personnel, p. 165.

usually beyond these concepts, for "being able to do as one pleases" at all times implies self-motivated creative activity. Assuming that the lack of socially enforced toil renders life meaningless degrades human nature and wrongly instills fear of further automation. If, however, one assumes the complete freedom to act according to one's inclinations--or, put differently, presupposing a permanent and universal condition of "leisure"--in a society with a highly advanced technological base, the anarchist holds that the necessary goods would nevertheless be produced voluntarily (activity motivated by feelings of mutual aid) with minimal effort and that creative productivity would become a diversified and universal phenomenon. In short, an open technology, reoriented in humanistic directions, would allow the concept of desire to replace that of need as the object of our productive efforts. (This will be discussed in greater detail below.)

As we shall see later in this chapter, the modern post-industrial state,[24] as it is called, has generated its own negation, for it is built on factors which in the long run are antithetical to the survival of human life. Much of the revival and spread of anarchist thought

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[24]Post-industrial in the sense that the state is beyond the particular dysfunctional occurrences that ruptured the earlier stages of industrialization.

since the 1960's must be seen in light of the predominance in the West of the welfare state and the "successes" of the authoritarian socialist regimes in creating "socialism." Modern anarchist thought has been assessed by its scholarly critics and others as a return to past forms of social, political, and economic organization. It is true that it remains anchored in the Enlightenment tradition. However, modern society has created a milieu in which anarchism has been able to revive itself and further develop its critique of statist society in accordance with "post-industrial" conditions. It seems that the flowering of anarchism in the postwar years is to a large degree a reflection of the deficiencies of the "realist" regimes of the modern world which have failed to achieve "The Great Society"--the "heavenly city" on earth. William O. Reichert comments,

> It is no exaggeration to say that we stand in awe and fear of Leviathan today, for the creature we have brought into being and nurtured over the past several hundred years now appears to be out of control, threatening our very existence as a free society. It is to this problem, largely ignored by contemporary political scientists, that the philosophy of anarchism is basically directed.[25]

Tracing the development of contemporary anarchist thought requires that we recall Kropotkin's theory of

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[25]Reichert, "Anarchism, Freedom and Power," p. 139.

sociality as a fact of human nature. As has already been mentioned in Chapter III, liberal and authoritarian socialist social sciences in the late nineteenth century were built upon at least a partial acceptance of a natural asociality and the necessity of restraining nature to allow an organized life. There is in these bodies of thought a strong distrust--indeed, almost a pathological fear--of nature unrestrained. Furthermore, there is a general belief that socialness is built upon the rejection of the animal in humans and the acceptance of an over-riding rule of law, anchored in scientific rationality; one can not simply leave things to function in their own way. Modern anarchist thought, like its nineteenth century counterpart, rejects the conception of liberty as deriving from imposed order, even if the latter idea is couched in pseudo-scientific jargon (e.g., "reinforcement," "resocialization," "stimulus-response," "socialist reconstruction," etc.). Anarchist thought has been developed in regard to earlier conceptions of mutual aid, spontaneity, a reasoning bodily-based science, etc., but to this has been added new dimensions that have gained importance in modern scientific contemplation of the human condition. For example, developments in psychology, linguistics, urban history, and ecology (both outside the anarchist movement and within it) have all had an important impact on anarchist social science in recent

decades.

In Chapter III, we saw that Kropotkin and other nineteenth century communitarian anarchists felt that sociality--human societal organization and relationships of mutual aid--arose "anterior" to humanity itself. Anarchist thought since then has usually tended toward the notion of a natural sociality so that there is no alienation of humans from their natural selves. Yet the tradition of Western thought and culture characterizes modern science as the rational force which can overcome the asocial heritage of humanity and the intransigence of nature. Contemporary anarchism, as anarchist thought in general, posits no such mind/body split, for with sociality a biological given, the mind need not transcend physical being.

Concerning the animal roots of sociality in human evolutionary history, a contemporary anarchist writer, Alexander Comfort, who is concerned especially with the psychology of power and freedom, with sexual repression in modern society and with the basic character of animal nature, states that

> At some point in primate evolution, the female became receptive all the year round and even throughout pregnancy. This apparently trifling change in behavior was probably the trigger or one of the triggers which set off the evolution of Man. . . . Sex

> ceases to be purely reproductive in function and acquires psychological and recreational functions apart from fertility.[26]

Because of the importance of sex as a medium of pleasure, unique social ties developed amongst early humanity. These sexual relationships added a new dimension to human social forms. Where there had been simply instinctive social ties, new kinds of social relationships based on sexual differentiation became possible. Rationality, in Comfort's conception, seems to have developed in the context of sexually based sociality.

> The Oedipal responses may carry an inherent risk of interference with eventual reproduction, but their persistence suggests a new adaptive function in their new situation. It seems reasonable to suggest that this function is morphogenetic, and that they have been positively selected because of their effects on human mental and social development. It is not impossible that by necessitating repression and a mind divided actively into conscious and unconscious levels they produced the most significant adaption in mammalian history, the emergence of conceptual thought.[27]

Thought, then, is seen to have derived from a natural process--a conclusion that contrasts with most social scientists' assumption that thought and social forms arose with the repression of the animal roots of human behavior.

The assumption of asociality as the basic fact of humanness is embodied in both liberal and authoritarian

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[26]Alexander Comfort, The Nature of Human Nature (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 13.

[27]Ibid., p. 29.

socialist conceptions of the origin of language. Language, the most unique of human attributes, is assumed by these schools of social science to derive from external reality's being imprinted upon the tabula rasa minds of humans. A common language is developed when common symbols become habitual; thus the study of grammar becomes the bulk of the conventional (behavioristic) schools of linguistics. When the causal laws--external stimuli--are discovered at some time in the future, a universal scientific language--the linguistic equivalent of social science's "Grand Theory" of behavior--able to generate scientifically precise communication, will become feasible. Language, then, is an artificiality--a structure embodying reinforced superstitions, "common wisdom," primitive passions, and so on--in short, a product of pre-scientific consciousness. Ideally, it should be entirely the "rational" construction of behavioral scientists.

An anarchist thinker better known for his work in linguistics than for his anarchism,[28] Chomsky addresses himself to the problem of the origin of language and its implications. Conceptually related to Kropotkin and nineteenth century libertarian socialist thought in many

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[28]This is somewhat ironic, since Chomsky came to linguistics via libertarian socialism. See Noam Chomsky, "A Discussion with Noam Chomsky," ed. Doug Richardson and John Hess, Black Rose 1 (1974): 63-64.

respects, he states the problem of language in classical anarchist form. Most schools of social scientific thought hold that language is "a system of organization of behavior"[29] created and controllable from external sources of reinforcement. Thus, the "socializing" influences of authority can "correct" language (as behavior) according to scientific, hierarchically determined and ordered principles. Chomsky holds instead that language reflects something much deeper--that it is endemic to human experience. Language is a basic and natural fact of our social existence.

> . . . there apparently are deep-seated and rather abstract principles of very general nature that determine the form and interpretation of sentences. It is reasonable to formulate the empirical hypothesis that such principles are language universals.[30]

Language, then, in its basic characteristics and its usage, provides

> . . . the basic criterion for determining that another organism is a being with a human mind and the human capacity for free thought and self-expression, and with the essential human need for freedom from the external constraints of repressive authority.[31]

Language, then, as an expression of humanness, presents an infinite variety of possibilities.

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[29]Chomsky, "Language and Freedom," For Reasons of State, p. 405.

[30]Chomsky, Problems of Knowledge and Freedom, p. 43.

[31]Chomsky, "Language and Freedom," p. 394.

Given the spontaneous nature of behavior in the early pre-hierarchical, pre-statist tribal community, language must have developed in much the same way as Kropotkin showed human social structures developing. Once the proper evolutionary stage was reached, language did not have to be imposed, but rather, simply utilized. Although it is a universal human property, it is nevertheless a diversified one. Furthermore, its appearance is completely spontaneous--contemporaneous with consciousness. Functional explanations, says Chomsky, are inadequate, for

> When properties of language can be explained on such 'functional' grounds, they provide no revealing insight into the nature of mind. Precisely because the explanations proposed here are 'formal explanations,' precisely because the proposed principles are not essential or even natural properties of any imaginable language, they provide a revealing mirror of mind (if correct). Such principles, we speculate, are priori for the species--they provide the framework for the interpretation of experience and the construction of specific forms of knowledge on the basis of experience--but are not necessary or even natural properties of all imaginable systems that might serve the junctions of human language.[32] [Italics mine]

By an evolutionary happenstance, humanity acquired a form of socially creative communication--a giant step beyond the sexual ties which first differentiated humans from other animals. The utilization of this human attribute

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[32]Chomsky, Problems of Knowledge and Freedom, pp. 44-45.

made possible the exchange of ideas, emotions, feeling--abstract conceptions. Because "free creation" underpins language, the tabula rasa conception of humans, which does not take this into account, shows itself to be lacking in explicative clarity. In contrast, Chomsky's anarchist theory of human development depicts people as capable of creativity within and because of their nature.

> . . . it is not denial of man's capacity for infinite 'self-perfection' to hold that there are intrinsic properties of mind that constrain his development . . . in a sense the opposite is true, that without a system of formal constraints there are no creative acts; specifically, in the absence of intrinsic and restrictive properties of mind, there can be only 'shaping of behavior' but no creative acts of self-perfection.[33]

Humans consciously create their own social or asocial forms. Comfort writes that natural selection--on the physical, organic, and cultural levels--brought about the capability for social behavior, abstract thought, and the communication of experience, all of which increased the pace of human evolutionary development.

> Once it had come, we find another vast acceleration in the speed of change; living things change faster than mere inorganic accumulations, because selection reduces the random component in their behavior. Thinking animals capable of purposive behavior change faster still, or change their environment to suit themselves, because by thinking and transmitting the results of their thought in custom, literature and

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[33]Chomsky, For Reasons of State, p. 395.

> social practice, they perform in their heads what organisms undergoing selection have to live out at random over millenia. Moreover this kind of information, unlike chromosomal information, does permit the transmission of acquired characteristics--which we call experience.[34]

The multidimensional nature of consciousness allows humans to attempt to mold a purposive environment by transforming their material relationships into social relationships which provide more satisfactory group life than had previously existed. Yet even the natural developments of social consciousness, deliberate thought, and social forms did not guarantee any specific pattern or triumphant history, for humans are limited in their knowledge and scope of purposes. "Natural selection responds; it does not plan . . . "[35] so that even when humans had developed the capability of purposive action, they did not have the knowledge to do all that they could do, nor was such action necessarily advantageous in a divided society in which one's pleasure rested on another's pain. Cultural, political, and historical development, then, although humanly determined, are not quite as "neat" as they often are depicted--i.e., as smooth and inevitable transitions from ape to antiquity, from Rome to the Holy Roman Empire, from the chaotic "Dark Ages" to the citizenly wisdom of

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[34]Comfort, The Nature of Human Nature, p. 7.

[35]Ibid., p. 29.

of the modern nation state. Comfort explains further that progressive development is at times haphazard, uneven, and even abortive.

> Man is not obliged by his nature to evolve at the social level, any more than the old fossil Lingula at the biological. There are peoples today making stone implements exactly like those of neo-lithic Man; and food gatherers living much as Pekin Man must have done. The great breakthroughs are characteristically local and once-for-all it was the agriculturists of the Eastern Meditteranean who broke through to cities and to further civilization which spread East and West; it was the city technological society of Europe that broke through to science--equally cultured societies in the past, and in China, India and South America had failed to make this precise breakthrough.[36]

There is, then, no fatalistic order to social development as it has occurred; the course of humanity could have been different. Many events of great importance have occurred randomly. However, to rule out deliberate action is to undermine the role of consciousness in history, as well as of material limits on human activity. With consciousness and language, it became possible for humans to intentionally change their natural surroundings and to structure the form of the group in response to the individual's needs (and vice versa). All of this occurred in a scarce environment with a highly limited technology; hence, class society, exploitation, domination, etc.[37]

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[36]Comfort, The Nature of Human Nature, p. 52. See Bookchin, The Limits of the City, for a discussion of the rise of the modern Western nation-state, ending in the modern social form of megalopolitanism.

[37]Kropotkin detailed this development in Mutual Aid and Modern Science and Anarchism.

Of all the contemporary anarchist theorists, Murray Bookchin deals most extensively with the development and effect of material want and hierarchical privilege. According to his historical analysis, lacking the large scale technological capability which could liberate humanity from the toil that necessity imposed, humans were unable to provide material security for everyone: There was an equality of struggle. At a certain point, however, a few successfully established themselves above the others due to knowledge, strength, luck, or any combination of these (see Chapter III above), creating privilege for some and slavery for the many. The transition from the earlier organic communal forms of mutual aid to privilege and the natural environment first occurred with the subjection of women, as Bookchin explains in the following passage.

> Even before the emergence of bourgeois society, Hellenistic rationalism validates the status of women as virtual chattels and Hebrew morality places in Abraham's hands the power to kill Isaac. The reduction of humans to objects, whether as slaves, women, or children, finds its precise parallel in Noah's [sic] power to name the beasts and dominate them, to place the world of life in the servitude of man. Thus from the two mainstreams of Western civilization, Hellenism and Judaism, the Promethean powers of the male are collected into an ideology of repressive rationality and hierarchical morality.[38]

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[38]Murray Bookchin, "Toward an Ecological Society," Roots 3 (1974): 6-7.

Bookchin observes further that, as Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno noted, the subjugation of women was symbolic of the conquest of nature, woman being the embodiment of nature by virtue of her biological function.[39] Woman, smaller and more physically vulnerable than man, represented the fulfillment of man's ancient dream of mastering nature; her biological function, viewed by the male-dominated society as a stigma of inferiority, became the focal point of her relations with man and the determining factor in the establishment of the hierarchy that solidly established the "male" principle, reason, above biological being.[40] This process provides insight not only into the nature of modern man's relationship with woman, but into the character of his relationship with the natural environment as well.

Yet the above process has occurred among some so-called "primitive" peoples as well, in similar forms: Scarcity of needs seems to be the significant common factor where it is evident. We may put forth the hypothesis that within tribes and/or clans experiencing an inadequacy of material needs, the physically stronger

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[39]Bookchin, "Toward an Ecological Society," p. 7.

[40]Thus, "matriarchy" never existed in substance, as a form of rule. The real "polarities" of history are not "patriarchy vs. matriarchy" but "hierarchy vs. anarchy." See Murray Bookchin, "On Hierarchy and Domination," Black Rose 1 (1974): 6.

males have dominated women and children, who have been the only "technology" available and who were relatively easy to subdue. This provided a certain degree of insured privilege for the strong individuals. Similarly, tribes dominated weaker tribes, as the bonds of mutual aid did not usually extend beyond the tribe.[41] Thus, the first "machinery" was human "machinery" enslaved by hierarchical social relationships; thus, the first "class struggle" is evident in the early stages of social development.

The communal forms of social life in the past--such as the tribe, village community, medieval commune, religious commune--usually failed to meet the needs of all their members and to free them from hard labor with the benefits of communal life, for technology in the past

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[41]See Kropotkin's Mutual Aid and The State: Its Historic Role.

[42]This analysis corresponds to that of most Marxian socialists insofar as the origin of domination and exploitation is concerned. See Friedrich Engels, Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (New York: International Publishers, 1971). However, communitarian anarchists differ with Marxist thinkers in their critical assessment of class struggle: Where Marxian thought generally views it as constructive, as good in the broad historical sense, the anarchist view toward it is quite negative. For example, Bookchin writes:

> "The history of the class struggle is the history of disease, of the wounds opened by . . . man's one-sided development in trying to gain control over nature by dominating fellow man. If the by-product of this disease has been technological advance, the main products have been repression, a horrible shedding of human blood and a terrifying distortion of the human psyche." (Bookchin, Post-Scarcity Anarchism, p. 187).

was too undeveloped to substantially ease the toil. Hence, even the relatively recent political attempts at reform--e.g., the French Revolution, the Paris Commune, etc.--were ultimately futile in terms of structural social change. Bookchin explains:

> However glowing and lofty were the revolutionary ideals of the past, the vast majority of people, burdened by material want, had to leave the stage of history after the revolution, return to work, and deliver the management of society to a new leisured class of exploiters. Indeed any attempt to equalize the wealth of society at a low level of technological development would not have eliminated want, but would have merely made it into a general feature of society as a whole, thereby recreating all the conditions for a new struggle over material things of life, for new forms of property, and eventually for a new system of class domination.[43]

The highest ideals of humans, from primitive Christianity--"All things in common"--to the French Revolution--"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"--have been repeatedly smashed by the difficulties of obtaining the basic needs of survival.[44] Escape from toil has always been a privilege in a world of

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[43]Bookchin, Post-Scarcity Anarchism, p. 89.

[44]One can thus see the importance of work in early socialist thought as the means of overcoming the division of society into orders of privilege. Proudhon in particular felt that if all people were busy working to meet their own needs, the needs of everyone would be adequately filled. Also, the "brotherhood" of socialist work would unite all people in a solidarity of need to replace the divisions of privilege. The question whether early socialist attempts could have worked in spite of the restrictions imposed by scarcity is an open one. The Russian Revolution, for example, was a dismal failure--for libertarian socialists, at least--which cannot be blamed entirely on the treachery of the Bolsheviks. Anarchists diverge on this difficult question.

scarcity, with the relative freedom of some (in a very narrow sense) built upon the slavery of others. By means of redirecting the progress of technology, contemporary anarchism sees the possibility of achieving freedom without generalized want and the abnegation of the individual in opposition to the community. Much of the potential for freedom in the technology of our times has been overlooked by modern worldviews that remain anchored in the technical realities of the nineteenth century. Engels, for example, based his argument for economic and political centralization upon the technological reality of his time; early industrial technology relied heavily upon steam power, which is provided from central sources. In many respects, the decentralization of the means of production was an impossibility in the early stages of the Industrial Revolution; anarchists today, like many other critics of the status quo, believe that a greater degree of decentralization in most aspects of life is warranted by the conditions of post-industrialism. It is a truism that times change, but the enormous changes that the industrial nations have made in the economic sphere during the last century (especially in the last thirty years) have hardly affected their socio-political realities in at least one important respect, the predominance of the hierarchical centralist style. Says Bookchin, "A century

ago, scarcity had to be endured; today it has to be enforced--hence, the importance of the state in the present era."[45] The continued existence of hierarchical forms of social relationships, as manifested in economics, politics, psychology, sexuality, and social thought in general, in face of the existing possibilities of a new life style through a different development and utilization of our technological capabilities is a major concern of contemporary anarchist thought.

Statist thinking, which is a legacy of scarcity and a highly limited technology and which is not exclusive to either capitalist or socialist ideologies, views hierarchical organization as the only means of effectively insuring that people meet their daily needs and rationally use natural resources. However, hierarchical forms of social organization have generated their own negation, as domination has become the disaster course for the contemporary world. Modern society is built on a heightened domination; the city dominates the surrounding countryside, the modern urban-centered nation-state dominates rural peoples of the world and dictates the use and abuse of the world's resources--all in the name of greater economic, social, and political efficiency. The

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[45]Bookchin, Post-Scarcity Anarchism, pp. 37-38.

The result, according to Bookchin,

> . . . is a crisis in social ecology. Modern society . . . is being organized around immense urban belts, a highly industrialized agriculture and capping both, a swollen, bureaucratized, anonymous state apparatus. If we put all moral considerations aside for a moment and examine the physical structure of this society, what must necessarily impress us is the incredible logistical problems it is obliged to solve--the problems of transportation, of density, of supply (of raw material, manufactured commodities and foodstuffs), of economic and political organization, of industrial location, and so forth. The burden . . . urbanized and centralized society places on any continental area is enormous.[46]

Yet more urbanization and centralization are precisely the solutions proposed by liberals, social democrats, and most authoritarian socialists. Consequently, our social problems are acerbated by a concurrent decline in our norms of human relations. It is hardly surprising that a highly centralized politico-economic structure has given rise to a mass conception of sociality which tends to replace the more individuated approaches that remain.

> Bureaucratic techniques of social management tend to replace humanistic approaches. All that is spontaneous, creative and individuated is circumscribed by the standardized, the regulated and the massified. The space of the individual is steadily narrowed by restrictions imposed upon him by a faceless impersonal social apparatus. Any recognition of unique personal qualities is increasingly surrendered to the manipulation of the lowest common denominator of the mass. A quantitative, statistical approach, a beehive manner of dealing with man, tends to triumph. . . .[47]

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[46]Bookchin, Post-Scarcity Anarchism, p. 62.

[47]Ibid., p. 65.

The hierarchical consciousness continually regenerates itself and the conditions of scarcity in articulated thought and in social forms, thereby reinforcing the idea of its own inevitability. However, its great "success" in modern society is literally reversing the course of organic evolution.

> By creating vast urban agglomerations of concrete, metal and glass, by overriding and undermining the complex, subtly organized ecosystems that constitute local differences in the natural world--in short, by replacing a highly complex, organic environment with a simplified inorganic one, man is disassembling the biotic pyramid that supported humanity for countless millennia. In the course of replacing the complex ecological relationships on which all advanced living things depend, for more elementary relationships, man is steadily restoring the biosphere to a stage which will be able to support only simpler forms of life. If this great reversal of the evolutionary process continues, it is by no means fanciful to suppose the preconditions for higher forms of life will be irreparably destroyed and the earth will become incapable of supporting man himself.[48]

Thus, the history of hierarchical society could well end with ecocide.

Anarchism differs from the prevalent modes of thought and social organization in that it declines to accept nature, which includes humans, as an object.[49]

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[48]Bookchin, Post-Scarcity Anarchism, pp. 67-68.

[49]"The notion that man must dominate nature emerges directly from the domination of man by man. The patriarchal family planted the seeds of domination in the nuclear relations of humanity; the classical split in the ancient world between spirit and reality--indeed, between mind and labor--nourished it; the anti-naturalist bias of Christianity tended to its growth. But it was not until

Anarchist thought has accepted as axiomatic that

> There are no hierarchies in nature, other than those imposed by hierarchical modes of human thought, but rather differences merely in function between and within living things.[50]

Just as there is no "king of beasts," there are no natural kings of humans, technical experts notwithstanding. However, hierarchy has generally been imputed as the essential drive in history toward overcoming the bestiality of the human animal. Put somewhat differently, the idea of inherent anti-socialness has created and in turn reinforced its own social reality. Anarchist thought, however, rejecting the idea of hierarchy, concurrently rejects domination not only of humans by other humans but also of the natural world by human society.

In modern society, nature, both organic and inorganic, is viewed as a vast pool of resources existing for productive and consumptive use. Where people of the ancient, medieval, and Renaissance worlds regarded the

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organic community relations, feudal or peasant in form, dissolved into market relationships that the planet itself was reduced to a resource for exploitation. This centuries-long tendency finds its most exacerbating development in modern capitalism. Owing to its inherently competitive nature, bourgeois society not only pits humans against each other, but also pits the mass of humanity against the natural world. Just as men are converted into commodities, so every aspect of nature is converted into a commodity, a resource to be manufactured and merchandised wantonly." Bookchin, Post-Scarcity Anarchism, p. 63.

[50] Ibid., p. 285.

cosmos as alive in the sense of being able to move itself and of being capable of self-activity, the "scientific" worldview of our times is based on the concept of inertia.[51] Nature reacts to external forces; change must be imposed. Quite simply, nature, which consists of matter and motion, is a passive entity holding no claim to an existence of its own. In an inanimate universe, humans are destined to become masters of the lush garden of Eden. The ecosystem is a fit object to be manipulated in the same manner as humans control their fellows.

As the social and ecological crises of society become increasingly insoluble, the old solutions nevertheless remain basic to most social thought. (Today, however, they emanate from the centers of technical expertise.) In lieu of critical self-examination, mainstream social science seeks to streamline its explanations and the operations of existing power structures. The ecocrisis, for example, is explicated not in terms of structural tendencies toward manipulating nature but rather, in terms of overpopulation: The spectre of Malthus has returned to haunt Western society, with many

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[51]David Kubrin, "How Sir Isaac Newton Helped Restore 'Law 'n Order' to the West," Liberation 16 (March 1972): 37. Bookchin comments, "Just as medieval theology structured the Christian heaven on feudal lines, so people of all ages have projected their social structure onto the natural world." Murray Bookchin, "Toward an Ecological Society," p. 5.

major social problems attributed to the excessive growth of population in recent years.[52] This phenomenon may be alleviated by imposed controls, as can other environmental problems such as "pollution" and "conservation." The prevalent idea is that the crisis of the environment and society must be handled by rational, scientific thinking--"environmentalism." That is, the solution to the problem must be instrumental in nature when society itself is viewed as an instrumentality--a vast mechanism of raw inputs and refined outputs.

> 'Environmentalism' tends increasingly to reflect an instrumentalist sensibility in which nature is viewed merely as a passive habitat, an agglomeration of external objects and forces that must be made more serviceable for human use irrespective of what these

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[52]Bookchin comments that expressing population increases simply as the ratio between birth rates and death rates fails to explain the complex factors behind such statistics.

> "A rising or declining birth rate is not a simple biological datum, any more than is a rising or declining death rate. Both are subject to the influences of economic status of the individual, the nature of family structure, the values of society, the status of women, the attitude toward children, the culture of the community, and so forth. A change in any single factor interacts with the remainder to produce the statistical data 'birth rate' and 'death rate.' Culled from such abstract ratios, population growth rates can easily be used to foster authoritarian controls and finally a totalitarian society, especially if Malthusian propaganda and the failure of voluntary birth control are used as an excuse. In arguing that the forcible measure of birth control and a calculated policy of indifference to hunger will eventually be necessary to stabilize world populations, the neo-Malthusians are already creating a climate of opinion that will make genocidal policies and authoritarian institutions socially acceptable."

(Bookchin, "Toward an Ecological Solution," Ramparts 8 [May 1970]: 10.)

> uses may be. 'Environmentalism,' in effect, deals with 'natural resources,' 'urban resources,' even 'human resources'. . . . [It] does not bring into question the underlying notion of the present society that man must dominate nature; rather, it seeks to facilitate that domination by developing techniques for diminishing the hazards caused by domination.[53]

The greater rationalization and command of the "resources" at the disposal of modern society is to be achieved according to scientific social laws so that at best, a balance may be struck between economic advantage and environmental integrity--a solution which in the long run will solve nothing. There is no long-term compromise with the earth's own delicate balance.

Socialist thought and the socialist tradition are in no way free from the idea of manipulating the earth. Socialism arose in the belief that the needs of humanity could best be met in a rational fashion if the potential of the new technology could be tapped for the benefit of all. The early socialists and present day authoritarian socialists viewed the cosmos as a vast resource to be utilized in a rational fashion. For example, the early authoritarian socialist, Etienne Cabet, in his utopian novel Voyage to Icaria, dealt with the environment as an abstraction. Cabet drew Icaria as "arranged with the most scrupulous regard for symmetry";[54] its capital, Icara, for

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[53]Bookchin, "Toward an Ecological Society," p. 4.

[54]Berneri, Journey Through Utopia, p. 224.

example, is perfectly round and is divided by a straight river which branches at the center of the city to form a round island. The perfected environment is no less manipulative and authoritarian than his views of the communist life of Icaria, where the wearing of the same styles, regulation of daily life by the use of bells, and such, resembled the ideal factory of modern rationalist authoritarian communism á la U.S.S.R. (see Chapter I above). Yet even more sophisticated socialists, notably Marx, assumed that human subjects create, fashion, and move the inert object nature. Bookchin analyzes the socialist idea of dominating the environment in this way:

> Marx does not advance beyond the moment of the master/slave relationship. The moment is transfixed and deepened into the Marxian theory of class struggle--in my view a grave shortcoming that denies consciousness the history of an emergent dialectic--and the split between subject and object is never wholly reconciled. All interpretations of the young Marx's 'Feuerbachian naturalism' notwithstanding, humanity, in Marx's view, transcends domination ambivalently by dominating nature. Nature is reduced to the 'slave,' as it were, of a harmonized society, and the self does not annul its Promethean content. Thus, the theme of domination is still latent in Marx's interpretation of communism; nature is still the object of human domination. So conceived, the Marxian concept of nature--quite aside from the young Marx's more ambivalent notions--vitiates the reconciliation of subject and object that is to be achieved by a harmonized society.[55]

Early anarchist thought, too, posited the desirability of a subjection of nature to meet the material needs of the

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[55]Murray Bookchin, "On Spontaneity and Organization," Liberation 16 (March 1972): 13-14.

people. Harmony between persons, a solidarity of interests and creativity, has been basic to anarchist thought starting with Proudhon, but harmony did not originally extend to the natural world; the common task of all individuals was "taming nature" for the "equal sharing of well-being."[56] Socialism in Proudhon's view--the negation of privilege and the creation of an economic order based on liberty and community resulting from the transformation of the raw material of nature into created goods--was the triumph of reason, the male mind embodied in the subordination of instinctual disorganized nature by labor and science. Bakunin, basing his theory of sociality on the negation of the "struggle for life,"[57] viewed reason as the means to a just economic and social structure in a natural world that was cruel, anti-social and indifferent to human needs and freedom. The environment, the adversary of an ignorant humanity in the past, would be developed "rationally" once the proper material-based consciousness developed. Thus, the cultivation of reason would enable society to maximize the yield of the bountiful earth. All would thereby escape Darwinian struggle.

The first conceptual shift with regard to anarchism and nature is found in the work of the Reclus brothers and

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[57]Bakunin, Bakunin, p. 169.

Kropotkin, all three of whom asserted that the lesson of unrestrained nature is not one of evil and that human animality does not have to be repressed when people live together. Hence, animal nature is a positive force. However, they still assumed the environment itself to be an asset--an aggregation of rocks, minerals, chemicals, etc.--to be "developed" in "a few years by communist work."[58] Only in this manner could humans be freed to live well. Nineteenth century anarchist thought rarely considered harmony as extending beyond men and sometimes women; it almost never considered human harmony with nature. Socialism was drawn as the triumph of the mind over the natural surroundings. It is true that for Bakunin and Kropotkin, the mind did not have to be transcended by work or sexual renunciation, but they did view the conquest of the environment as the key to freedom from drudgery. After Kropotkin's brief period of communist labor, as depicted in his Fields, Factories and Workshops,[59] humans would no longer have to concern themselves exclusively with surviving. They would go about fulfilling their creative needs and would begin to feel a greater camaraderie with nature, as did the primitives he described in his Ethics, who rarely killed

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[58]Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, Freedom Press (1912) edition, p. 69.

[59]Peter Kropotkin, Fields, Factories and Workshops (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969).

except for need, and who were in "awe" of the beauty and majesty of the natural surroundings of which they were integrally part.

Present day anarchist thought differs most from earlier anarchist thought in its conception of humans in nature. Most communitarian anarchists today place a greater emphasis on humanity as a conscious part of a diversified structure of organic life and inorganic matter subsumed under the rubric, "ecology."[60]

Contemporary Anarchist Social Science: Toward the Creation of Eco-Community

Like socialist thought in general, anarchism views technology as misused, but its vision of technology's humanistic potential is considerably broader. Most communitarian anarchists hold that if the direction of its use and development were reversed, technology would become the means of eliminating not only privilege and thus domination from human society, but also of allowing for the first time since the rise of hierarchical society the fulfillment of physical needs with little "work" as

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[60]Not all anarchists hold this view. There are still many classical "Bakuninists" grounded in the worldview of nineteenth century anarchism. Furthermore, there are some "class-struggle" anarcho-syndicalists, as well as individualist anarchists, whose primary interests lie outside ecology.

we know it. Where socialism in the past had to assume a closed technology, which could (at best) generate only an equality of need with a highly limited meeting of desires, anarchism today is engaged in the conceptual clarification of socialism as it could be in a post-scarcity setting[61]--that is, as a network of relationships transformed by an open, humanistic technology. The old socialist tradition has been bypassed in this important aspect by the achievability of a revolutionized material basis of communal life which was virtually inconceivable in Fourier's, Marx's, Engels', Proudhon's, Bakunin's, and William Morris' lifetimes. Today, the concept of desire has become essential to the anarchist reconstructive ideal.

Early anarchists thought that a generalized knowledge of science and socialized technology could liberate humans from exploitation by other humans. Participation in the various aspects of scientific work, to some degree, in Bakunin's and Proudhon's visions of

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[61]A toil-less economic system. The use of the term here is not in the same sense as Daniel Bell's critique of it; in the latter's view, "post-scarcity" implies an infinite supply of commodities. Anarchism's conception of freedom does not derive from a plethora of things, but rather from the existence of satisfying social relations. "Post-scarcity" implies the universal fulfillment of basic material needs, but it is a precondition of freedom rather than a freedom in itself. It characterizes a society free from meaningless work and meaningless commodities.

socialism would no longer be a privileged occupation, but rather, an integral facet of socialist life and a universal activity. Bakunin felt that true socialism--a society based on liberty, equality and solidarity--could come into being and survive if its members were well acquainted with scientific method and reason. His image of science was quite Newtonian and thus mechanistic and anti-animistic, with the conquest of nature being the precondition of securing an adequate material base for the termination of exploitation. In present anarchist thought, however, a new social relationship between individuals depends upon the renunciation of hierarchy, which began with the domination of women and ended with the domination of the environment. In contrast to the "environmentalist" ideal of a managed economy and a moderated use of "resources," contemporary anarchism seeks new relationships between humans, but with the natural world as well.

> Ecology . . . advances a broader conception of nature and of humanity's relationship with the natural world. . . . [I]t sees the balance and intensity of the biosphere as an end in itself. Natural diversity is to be cultivated not only because the more diversified the components that make up the ecosystem, the more stable the ecosystem, but diversity is desirable for its own sake, a value to be cherished as part of a spiritualized notion of the living universe. . . . Ecology, furthermore, advances the view that humanity must show a conscious respect for the spontaneity of the natural world, a world that is much too complex and variegated to be reduced to Galilean physics--mechanical properties. Some systems ecologists notwithstanding, I would hold with Charles Elton's view that 'The world's future has to be managed, but this management would not be like a game of chess . . .

> [but] more like steering a boat.' The natural world must be allowed the considerable leeway of a spontaneous development--informed, to be sure, by human consciousness and management as nature rendered self-conscious and self-active--to unfold and actualize its wealth of potentialities.[62]

An ecologically sound society is possible in the modern world, but it is directly dependent upon the development of a "liberated technology" (Bookchin's term), for "technology must be viewed as the basic structural support of a society; it is literally the framework of an economy and of many institutions."[63] Technological sophistication is extremely important to contemporary communitarian anarchist thought, but there are two crucial criteria in the anarchist evaluation of technological progress: First, that it be concordant with the requirements of the ecosystem, and second, that it concretely promote the end of human freedom.[64] The material base for a transformed technology already exists, at least in the developed countries; however, the various modern ideologies of scarcity--all entailing power

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[62]Bookchin, "Toward an Ecological Society," p. 4.

[63]Bookchin, Post-Scarcity Anarchism, p. 87.

[64]Goodman wrote:
"Technology is a branch of moral philosophy, with the criterion of prudence, efficiency, concern for remote effects, safety, amenity, perspecuity and repairability of machines, caution about interlocking priorites determined by broad social needs." (Paul Goodman, (The New Reformation: Notes of a Neolithic Conservative [New York: Random House, 1970], p. 44)

structures and elites and embodying the values of hard work, guilt, discipline, and imposed order--still prevail. Ironically, the same values and structures created and sustained a productive system so successful that it has undermined scarcity, its nourishing condition. Scarcity is maintained by a myth preserving the illusion of a struggle against nature and against other humans. Inequitable distribution preserves this idea of scarcity so well that there is almost universal acceptance of the Social Darwinist assumption that one's needs are filled at the expense of the needs of others. Therefore, anarchists seek to transform the modern consciousness.

The question of the means of such a transformation may be raised at this point. While few anarchist thinkers deny the necessity of a "social revolution," the form of such a revolution is disputed, especially with regard to questions of violence. However, all are in agreement that consciousness is not changed in a cataclysmic moment of revolution. Reichert explains:

> The social revolution, all now generally agree, will not be something sudden and complete in itself, but a long evolutionary process arising in the will of individual persons and spreading to others through the techniques of education and example. Basic to the social revolution is the transformation in attitude which will have to take place in the minds of individuals regarding the phenomenon of power. Where men tend today to think of power in terms of organized force and compulsion, they must come to think of it as an act of voluntary co-operation aimed toward social creativity. . . . [A]narchism, since it does not depend upon the seizure of power, as other revolutionary

> theories do, can logically advocate a program of social rebellion aimed toward the gradual but persistent transformation of the social conditions within society by genuine non-violent means.[65]

Anarchist social science, rejecting the concept of academic objectivity, is firmly committed to the abolition of domination and hierarchy and to the promotion of individual autonomy.[66] It perceives these goals, which imply a harmonious community,[67] direct democracy, a humanized technology, and a decentralized system as not only better than existing social forms, but also as the necessary preconditions for the survival of the human species and of most other forms of life as well. Social

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[65]Reichert, "Anarchism, Freedom and Power," pp. 147-148. This is not to say, however, that all anarchists are committed to the concept of pacifism in the face of state violence.

[66]The anarchist critique of objectivity would accept the various criticisms that have been advanced against this concept by anti-behavioralists of many persuasions. However, anarchists emphasize not the impossibility of an objective stance, but rather, the undesirability of "objectivity." Humans and the various forms of life and inorganic matter are subjects in the sense that they are involved in a vast web of interrelationships as the fact of their very being.

[67]This does not mean that there can be an absence of discord in human society. Reichert explains:

> "Anarchists do not suppose for a minute that all men would ever live in harmony without the dirupting conflicts which from time to time set one man or group against another. They do maintain, however, that the settlement of conflict must arise spontaneously from the individuals involved themselves and not be imposed upon them by an external force such as government." ("Anarchism, Freedom and Power, p. 143)

development in the so-called advanced countries has carried these libertarian concepts beyond the realm of morality, for the extreme precariousness of life on a planet that is now faced with nuclear war and ecocide (to say nothing of the threats to physical and/or spiritual survival posed by "minor" national antagonisms, pollution, urban decay, alienation, technological dehumanization, etc.) seems to bestow a concrete dimension upon the radical reconstructive ideal. Hierarchical forms of consciousness and hierarchical social structures have brought about the global crises with which we are confronted: The anarchist social scientist holds that attempts to extricate ourselves from them by further hierarchical solutions are impossible and often tend, in fact, to further aggravate the problems. As Bookchin expresses it, "What was once regarded as practical and objective has become eminently impractical and irrelevant in terms of man's development towards a fuller, unfettered existence."[68] The anarchist thinker conceives of the solutions in terms of reconciling what are generally recognized in this society as dichotomies. This requires a vast expansion of the range of social experience and consciousness, with no hindrances

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[68]Bookchin, Post-Scarcity Anarchism, pp. 69-70.

upon the development of new forms.

> Anarchism is not only a stateless society but also a harmonized society which exposes man to the stimuli provided by both agrarian and urban life, to physical activity and mental activity, to unrepressed sensuality and self-directed spirituality, to communal solidarity and individual development, to regional uniqueness and worldwide brotherhood, to spontaneity and self-discipline, to the elimination of toil and the promotion of craftsmanship.[69]

Regarded as mutually antagonistic within a highly fragmented society characterized by the atomization and isolation of the individual, the extremely high degree of the division of labor, consumerism, and the polarization of rural and urban areas, the reconciliation and realization of the above elements are posited by anarchist social science as both possible and necessary. The product of such a transformation would be both a new stage in the dialectic of social development (due to the advanced material base), and yet a return to past forms of social relations and of interaction with the natural environment. The unity with the past lies in the existence of a sense of community and of a sensitivity to the natural surroundings. At both "poles" of the historical process--at the most primitive stage and at the most highly developed--we find the phenomenon of communistic society.

> . . . [at] the first, a technologically primitive society that still lived in awe and fear of nature; [at] the second, a technologically sophisticated

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[69]Bookchin, Post-Scarcity Anarchism, p. 78.

> utopia that could live in reverence for nature and brings its consciousness to the service of life. Moreover, the first lived in a social network of rigidly defined reciprocities based on custom and compelling need; the second could live in a free constellation of complementary relations based on reason and desire. Both are separated by the enormous development of technology, a development that opens the possibility of a transcendence of the domain of necessity.[70]

The element central to the anarchist modes of social organization is spontaneity--that is, behavior, feeling and thought that is not <u>externally</u> restricted but that is instead <u>internally</u> controlled. This concept suggests the capability of the individual to regulate his/her own actions and to shape actively the community's realities. Thus, it is antithetical to the ascribed image of anarchist activity, which is one of undeliberated and impulsive behavior. Rather than thwarting social organization and structure, spontaneity

> . . . ordinarily yields non-hierarchical forms of organization, forms that are truly organic, self-created, and based on voluntarism. The only serious question that is raised in connection with spontaneity is whether it is informed or not.[71]

That spontaneity must be "informed" necessitates the existence of social science and "pure" science (natural) in addition to the scientific activity connected

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[70]Bookchin, "On Spontaneity and Organization," p. 15.

[71]<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 9.

with the development of technology. Science, in the anarchist perspective, should be quite different from the forms of science with which we are familiar; the sciences, both natural and social, should be reintegrated and directed toward the achievement of ecocommunity, a general harmony and sense of purpose on the part of humans toward each other and the natural world. According to Goodman, scientific activity should be more akin to natural philosophy than to the environmental and behavioral engineering to which it is presently oriented. In Utopian Essays and Practical Proposals, he wrote,

> . . .[Natural philosophers] conceive themselves as devoted to a kind of personified Nature from whom they get primary satisfactions. They would not say that 'nature is neutral,' though of course 'she' is beyond men's petty concerns. They love nature, or are curious, or surprised, or awe-struck at finding Cosmos in Chaos. . . . Correspondingly, nature provides principles, and often goals, of ethics. This is different from the excitement of a 'modern scientist' in his confrontation of nature, which is rather that of solving a hard puzzle and getting on with the work of the self-centered system of science.[72]

Science, in the view of the anarchist thinker, must be de-mythologized and transformed--like technology--into a phenomenon completely beneficial to humanity. Rather than a "morally neutral" abstraction subject to manipulation by power elites, science should be a universal concern; it must be creative and supportive of community.

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[72]Paul Goodman, Utopian Essays and Practical Proposals (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 45.

We have seen that all anarchist thought is severely critical of the centralist mode of social organization. The common theme of anarchist objections to centralization is that the latter is invariably fatal to community (meaningful sociation on an everyday basis), geographical and otherwise. Of the contemporary writers, Bookchin's and Goodman's works are especially important as explications of decentralism. Contending that centralization is a system designed for control--convenience of administration[73]--modern anarchists envision diverse ecocommunities[74] loosely federated with one another so as to maximize the individual's

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[73]"In a centralized enterprise, the function to be performed is a goal of the organization rather than of persons (except as they identify with the organization). The persons are personnel. Authority is top-down. Information is gathered from below in the field and is processed to be usable by those above; decisions are made in headquarters; and policy, schedule, and standard procedure are transmitted downward by chain of command. The enterprise as a whole is divided into departments of operation to which are assigned personnel with distinct roles, to give standard performance. . . . The system was devised to discipline armies; to keep records, collect taxes, and perform bureaucratic functions; and for certain kinds of mass production. It has now become pervasive." (Goodman, People or Personnel, pp. 3-4.)

[74]Anarchists do not advocate imposing a single organizational form on society. Indeed, wrote Goodman,

> " . . . it is improbable that there could be a single appropriate style of organization or economy to fit all the functions of society, any more than there could--or ought to be--a single mode of education, 'going to school,' that suits almost everybody; or any more than there is a 'normal' psychology that is healthy for almost everybody." (Ibid., p. 27.)

autonomy and that of the basic social unit.[75] In functional terms, decentralization would be economically efficient, for with a minimum of central intervention, individual units would be able to regulate themselves. Goodman wrote,

> The real obstacles in the way of decentralization and local liberty are not those that are usually mentioned, namely the size of populations, the complexity of society and technology, the necessary economies of scale, the national economy. Free citizens could cope with such difficulties, subdivide administration, simplify where complexity has too many disadvantages, federate where it is worthwhile, control necessary bureaucracies from below. In many of the functions we are here concerned with, there are substantial gains in efficiency and savings in cost just by operating on a smaller scale. . . .[76]

He observed that "a central clearing house of information" about the whole federation would be advantageous, but planning and decision-making are best done locally.[77] However, as important as it is, efficiency is not the raison d'etre of decentralized organization. Rather, the main arguments for the dissolution of megalopolitan organization center around the improvement in the quality of life that such a change would generate.

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[75]Goodman described decentralization as "a kind of social organization; it does not involve geographical isolation, but a particular sociological use of geography." (People or Personnel, p. 15.)

[76]Goodman, New Reformation, p. 183.

[77]Ibid., p. 13.

Anarchist writers, inspired by the historical examples of the Greek polis and the medieval commune, have sought to recapture certain features of the above forms of community as essential to "the good life" of a free society. At their heights, both modes of organization were characterized by a large degree of local autonomy, which allowed functional ecocommunities in incomplete forms. Given the technological advances of the modern age, it is now possible to "resurrect" regionalism, as well as the authentic ecological consciousness of the distant (that is, "primitive") past, but to transcend simultaneously the strict limits that scarcity had always imposed upon human relationships and to construct a social system whose values would be primarily aesthetic. That is, all creative activity could be described loosely in terms of art when people are free of external sources of compulsion and the heavy burden of need. The "liberatory technology," which would eliminate drudgery and thus alienation, would simultaneously allow everyone to become an artist and all work to become art. As the British anarchist Herbert Read put it, art should be "a quality inherent in all work well done."[78] All activity in a free society would be determined by the creative will of

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[78]Herbert Read, To Hell With Culture (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), p. 93.

individuals who are united by their essentially affective ties to others.

Modern anarchism, while it draws heavily upon the theories of human nature and society propounded by its intellectual ancestors, is nevertheless definitely based in the realities of the twentieth century, in both its critical analysis and its constructive speculation. If we consider the visions of the early nineteenth, mid-nineteenth, and late nineteenth-early twentieth century anarchists, described in the chapters above, the ideal mode of social organization sketched below by Bookchin is illustrative of the above point.

> . . . a free community will regard agriculture as husbandry, an activity as expressive and enjoyable as crafts. Relieved of toil by agricultural machines, communitarians ["communitarians" does not connote a single ideal, as "Communist man," but rather is a polymorphous concept which implies the existence of many types of free people] will approach food cultivation with the same playful and creative attitude that men so often bring to gardening. Agriculture will become a living part of human society, a course of pleasant physical activity and, by virtue of its ecological demands, an intellectual, scientific and artistic challenge. Communitarians will blend with the world of life around them as organically as the community blends with the region. They will regain the sense of oneness with nature that existed in humans from primordial times. Nature and the organic modes of thought it always fosters will become an integral part of human culture; it will reappear with a fresh spirit in man's paintings, literature, philosophy, dances, architecture, domestic furnishings, and in his very gestures and day-to-day activities. Culture and the human psyche will be thoroughly suffused by a new animism. The region will never be exploited, but it will be used as fully as possible. Every attempt will be made by the community to satisfy its requirements

> locally--to use the region's energy resources, minerals, timber, soil, water, animals, and plants as rationally and humanistically as possible and without violating ecological principles.[79]

Bookchin expressed an ideal in the above passage, but a critical examination of this ideal reveals no fixed plan for organizing and implementing the changes that are required. One finds this neglect to delineate in detail "post-revolutionary" anarchist structures in the work of almost all anarchist thinkers, with the possible exception of Paul Goodman.[80] This may be viewed as either a weakness or a strength of anarchist social science. Liberal and authoritarian socialist social scientists, who emphasize prediction and rationalized social planning, tend to be extremely critical of a body of theory which contains no prescribed answers to many particular problems that could arise in the course of a social transformation, nor the exhortation to utilize existing structures in a somewhat changed setting. Yet anarchist social science is, by its openness, able to approach a situation of social reconstruction--hypothetical or real--with a more undogmatic disposition than other

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[79]Bookchin, Post-Scarcity Anarchism, pp. 118-119.

[80]Goodman's numerous sociological works abound in "practical proposals," some of which are incompatible with his ultimate anarchist vision. That is, his "blueprints" appear to be somewhat reformist, on a level different from his anarchism.

existing paradigms (though certainly not "objective"--see p. 207 above); it is hardly limited by projections of present social structures and relations upon the forms of the future. Furthermore, the anarchist social scientist perceives his/her function not as a vanguard agent of social engineering, but as primarily a "consciousness raiser"[81] of the potential for freedom in the human animal. There is no necessity, then, for anarchist social science to apply itself chiefly to examining the minute operations of the present's various hierarchical organizations nor to enumerating the fine points of the future's structures. It is a common assumption that the former is irrelevant to anarchist social science's goal, and the latter would take care of itself under conditions of freedom. Furthermore, as Reichert observes, the open-ended, anti-doctrinaire nature of anarchist thought is an advantage with regard to its overriding concern for the freedom of the individual.

> Many poorly informed observers condemn anarchism as a political theory because it fails to set forth a detailed plan for the implementation of the utopia it supposedly holds out to us. . . . Anarchism . . . is oriented toward the future and is wholly in accord with the notion that contemporary life is inadequate and unsatisfactory from the point of view of the individual. Yet anarchism as a social theory is valid in the eyes of the anarchist whether or not it ever produces any practical results. For anarchism directs itself at

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[81]Perhaps this explains the persistent anarchist preoccupation with education.

> the individual and not at the mass. It is a 'way of life' which makes it possible for the individual to transcend the physical restrictions and limitations he finds himself surrounded by.[82]

There is another feature of anarchist social science that is perhaps simultaneously a weakness and a strength: Because twentieth century anarchism has not been widely recognized as a serious alternative worldview, it has had virtually no dialogue with the more "established" schools of social science. Therefore, its recent development has been somewhat "closed" in the sense that there has been a lack of two-way communication with most social scientists. Unfortunately, because the anarchist critique as well as its ideal has been largely ignored in academic circles, there has been little constructive "feedback" to anarchism from outside the anarchist movement which would force anarchists to further revise and strengthen their critique. Likewise, mainstream social science is the less for its failure to address itself to the issues anarchist social science has raised.

Anarchist thinkers, excluded from the mainstream(s) of social scientific activity, have not been limited by the "boundaries" of the more "successful" paradigms. Furthermore, anarchism's relative isolation has prompted a

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[82]Reichert, "Anarchism, Freedom and Power," p. 146.

more introspective social science in that the tendency to be theoretically self-conscious is greater when one is faced with delineating one's own conceptual system and explicating it from an insurgent position. It may be true that its isolation makes it easier for anarchist theory to develop and to retain a certain pristine quality, but at the same time, it also tends to stifle the vitality which any body of thought requires for its continued development as a relevant and effective theory. Of course, the most basic values and assumptions of the anarchist thinker have necessitated the independent development of anarchist social science, but it is the opinion of this writer that the mutual contact of the latter with antithetical and partially sympathetic schools of social science would be fruitful for all involved.

We have seen that there is an anarchist paradigm of social science which is distinct from the better known models of social science. However, the impact of the anarchist paradigm and the many specific works it has generated has yet to be felt in political science, political sociology, criminology, social psychology, social ecology, psychology, etc. Whether or not it is accepted as a valid perspective by non-anarchists and whether or not it ultimately succeeds as a social science will be determined by anarchists' ability to reveal new

possibilities for everyday living--that is, new dimensions of freedom for each of us. Bakunin's and Malatesta's admonition against allowing science and even anarchism itself to become abstractions seems to have been heeded in most anarchist theory construction to date; anarchist social science does not posit a single utopian form as a finite solution to all problems of human life. Panaceas are necessarily abstractions. If it is to enhance freedom, anarchist social science must help to provide the conceptual tools necessary to further explicate and create the new realities of freedom--or, put differently, new ways of being human. In practical terms, anarchist social science hopes to stimulate widespread interest in further researching alternate social forms as replacements for structures based upon hierarchical power. Its present value, however, is that it represents an entirely different mode of studying people and their relationships to social structures, starting as it does with the assumption that order derives from liberty. We may close with William Reichert's statement of the value of the anarchist social scientific endeavor for anarchist and non-anarchist scholars alike:

> To be an anarchist, then, is not to overturn the state by force and violence but to reject the use of force and violence as a means of maintaining social order. Thus conceived, the philosophy of anarchism

becomes a rich and fertile area of imaginative social perception which political science has not yet discovered to any great extent. Those political scientists who dare to take seriously its admonitions concerning freedom and power may well reap a rich reward, saving us from the cul-de-sac in which we now seem to be caught.[83]

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[83]Reichert, "Anarchism, Freedom and Power," p. 148.

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